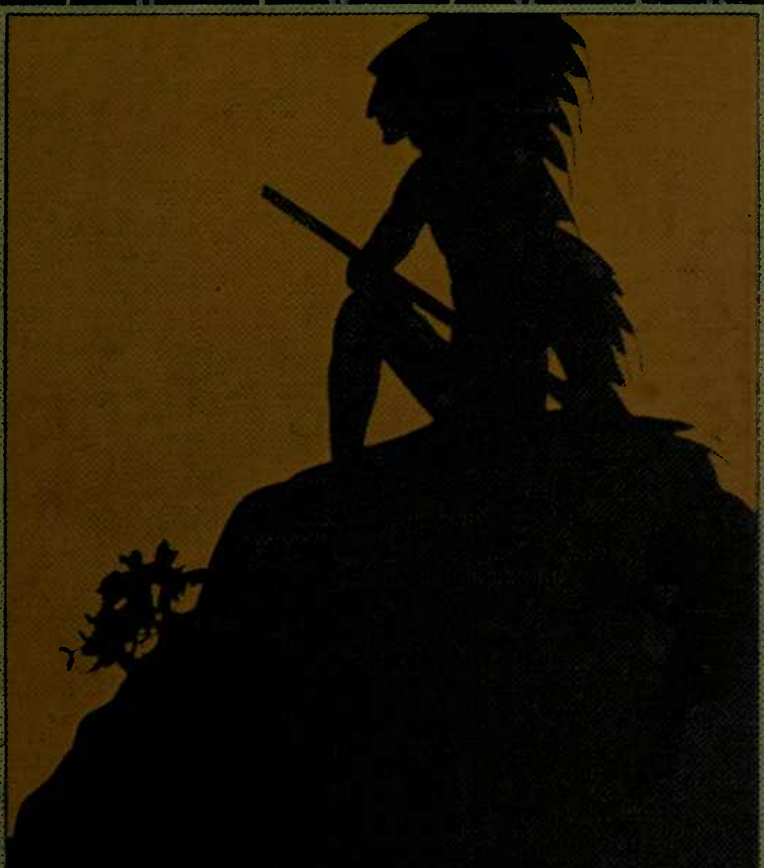

THE MAN OF YESTERDAY

MARY HOLLAND KINKAID

THE MAN OF YESTERDAY

Mark Cannon, Esq.
Sunday May 17th 1908

"SHE WAS A CHICKASAW FOR THE HOUR"—*Page* 66

THE MAN OF YESTERDAY

A Romance of a Vanishing Race

BY

MARY HOLLAND KINKAID

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS IN COLOR BY
VOLNEY A. RICHARDSON

NEW YORK
FREDERICK A. STOKES COMPANY
PUBLISHERS

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March, 1908

To the Memory of My Father

2026990

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BOOK I

CHAPTER I

SPRINGTIME

It was springtime in the Indian Territory. The month was March, but the rolling prairies were freshly green and the low mountains were newly clothed with verdure. Mocking birds sang in the trees that skirted the running streams. The cotton fields lay brown and damp after the early ploughing. The roads, deep grooved and muddy, were so nearly impassable that Tishomingo, the capital of the Chickasaw Nation, counted not a stranger among its few inhabitants who waited impatiently for the arrival of the governor and his staff.

In the last decade of the nineteenth century Tishomingo had been for nearly forty years the Chickasaw seat of government, but it had grown little beyond the few houses built at the foot of the hill upon which the capitol was erected the year after the Nation had purchased its independence from the Choctaws. Far removed from the railways, Tishomingo had escaped invasion by tourists and white settlers. Shielded by low mountains the village lay in a tiny valley. Past it flowed the deep and turbulent waters of Pennington Creek, which, at its source, gushed in full volume from the earth and then hastened with many a curve and eddy to the Washita River. The creek had worn in the granite rocks many strange nooks and pleasant glens. Here and there it had torn away mighty boulders and chiselled majestic forms from the face of the overhanging cliffs.

In all Indian Territory there was not a more fertile valley or a more sheltered spot than that which had been chosen as the site of Tishomingo. When George Beaumont, a

young halfbreed, had come hither with the six Chickasaws to whom had been entrusted the work of choosing a place for the meeting of the legislature, he had straightway decided to build himself a cabin high up on a rocky ledge overlooking the creek. This cabin had expanded into a long, rambling house, surrounded by broad galleries. The old stone chimney still served for the fireplace of the living room, which was allowed to retain much of the primitive character of the log dwelling. Other chimneys rose at intervals on either side of the large house, which, clapboarded and painted, enjoyed the distinction of being one of the most imposing residences in the Nation.

From the front gallery of this house a young girl, looking through an archway of budding vines, beheld the coming of the springtime to the quiet valley. She was leaning against a white pillar that brought out the rich colour of her dark complexion and emphasised its exquisite tint. The face, lighted by large eyes with a haunting steadfastness of gaze, had a delicacy of outline and a regularity of feature that betokened a fine heredity. Lounging upon the steps at the girl's feet was a young man, broad-shouldered and deep-chested, long of limb and strong of arm. Like his companion he had a dark skin, but in place of the olive his face showed a deep brown that was burnished by exposure to the fierce sun.

"You are silent, Pakali," said the young man. "It seems that you have little to say to me since your return from that St. Louis school this last time."

He spoke in full tones with the slightest trace of a guttural accent, and turned to her a face the strength of which was emphasised by the straight lines of hair brushed back from the forehead.

"Have I been different, Joe?" the girl asked with a note of surprise in her voice.

"Different? Surely you must know that you have been

made into a white woman with all the graces and all the manners that belong to what is called civilisation," the man answered slowly, as if he weighed his words. "You do not even call me by my Indian name. I suppose you wish me to address you as Lenore, or perhaps you would prefer Miss Beaumont."

Pakali seated herself upon the step and, putting a slender hand upon her accuser's wrist, answered gently:

"You will always be my old playmate, Hattak-Owa-Hushi-Osh, The Man Looking for the Sun. I called you 'Joe' because I thought it seemed foolish for us to cling to any of our Indian customs when in all the Nation, your family and mine are almost the only ones that try to perpetuate the tribal names."

"To you I must be Hattakowa or nothing," the man insisted. "Two or three generations back my grandmother, or my great-grandmother, married a white man, and I have inherited the white man's name, Joe Dixon, but somehow I feel that I do not belong to this halfbreed race of Chickasaws and Choctaws. The spirit of my kinsman, the old A-push-a-ma-ta-hah, is often in me, I believe, for I hate the white man's ways."

"A-push-a-ma-ta-hah, the Choctaw chief, was the friend of the white man," Pakali said with a smile. "He knew that many of the white man's ways are better than the red man's ways. I cannot understand why you rebel against the progress of our race. Dear Hattakowa, you are often unreasonable."

"Perhaps I am." The young man answered smile with smile. "The truth is, Pakali, that I am unhappy because, since the old days when we went to the Boggy Depot school together, you have become so much wiser than I that I can no longer touch your heart with any words of mine. I can speak only of the common things of life. Once you loved the forest lore, and you liked to hear of the hunt. You

listened long to the legends handed down from that far-off time before the white man came to steal our country from us. Now when I am with you there is often a stillness while you search for some speech that means nothing."

"We are boy and girl no longer. It is natural we should find each other changed." Pakali dropped her eyes beneath the searching gaze of Hattakowa, who waited a moment before he spoke again.

"Since you came home I have reasoned about our relation to each other," he said, looking away from her, and with an effort steadying his voice. "I have found out that Pakali, the Flower, has become to me, Aiahnichih-Choyoh, a woman to prefer above all others." Having spoken he turned again to her and he saw the red blood dye her cheek.

"Hush, Hattakowa. Make no more gallant speeches," Pakali made haste to answer.

"You know I am still so much a savage that I cannot lie to a woman," he retorted, as an angry light came into his eyes. "I have loved you always, ever since we were poor, lonely little children, who walked miles together to that terrible school Uncle Sam had sold to a cruel Yankee. Yet that school, where we were abused so shamefully, is the only one I ever liked. The Texas college, where they gave me what is called an education, is said to be a pleasant place, but I hated the years of confinement there. I know now that I missed you every day, and that even in the first year I dreaded the discovery I have made since you came back to Tishomingo."

"What discovery have you made?" Pakali inquired with a challenge in her voice.

"You and I, who mingle in our veins the blood of the white man and the red man, must give allegiance to one race or the other. You have risen to the white man's standard, and I have answered to the backward call. You are an American, I am an Indian."

Hattakowa left his seat beside Pakali and paced up and down the wide path which led from the house to the road along the ledge that overlooked the creek and the village beyond. The girl was quiet for several moments, and then when Hattakowa came near to her in his restless walk she stopped him.

"Surely, you do not think me disloyal to my people," she said, with a little quiver of the lip. "I am proud of every drop of my Indian blood. Always I have remembered that 'I am a Chickasaw' was the highest boast of my warrior ancestors."

"And I can add to the Chickasaw watchword 'Chahtah-siah,'" Hattakowa answered.

"Yes, you are a Choctaw-Chickasaw and more Indian than I. Perhaps that is the reason you are inclined to judge me severely." The girl rose, and walking beside him added: "All of us Chickasaws and Choctaws are as one family. Because I have passed many years in the white man's school the ties of kindred are not loosened."

"I love you with a love that is above the feeling of kinship. I love you with the great love that covets you," the man replied. "Through my boyhood and youth you have always been in my heart. You need not tell me that you will never be the Star Woman who rules my destiny, for a power above you has made you that."

Pakali clasped her hands together and her bosom rose as if she were choking back her sobs.

"I do not mean to cause you pain, Pakali. You need not tell me that you never can belong to my home. I know what you would say. There is between us a chasm greater than any Pennington has cleft in the rocks, for I am an Indian and you are almost a white woman."

They were standing at the end of the path whence they could look down the road which wound up from the village. Before Pakali could find words with which to soften the

truth spoken by Hattakowa, he called her attention to the approach of two horsemen.

"Your father is bringing a stranger home with him," he said.

Pakali glanced down the road. Then, impulsively, she gave both her hands to Hattakowa, who held them for a moment, while his heart swelled with the rising tide of his great passion.

"Hattakowa, we have been foolish in trying to understand ourselves," Pakali said, brushing away a tear. "You know as long as I live I shall need your friendship."

"As long as I live you will have more than friendship from me."

The two horsemen came near. George Beaumont, Pakali's father, rode ahead of the stranger. Seated upon his ornately carved Mexican saddle he showed that, despite a growing stoutness, he retained much of his youthful vigour. His long hair, untouched by grey, fell about his ears. He was a halfbreed who retained the colour of the fullblood. Beneath bushy brows, keen eyes looked out with a restless glance. In repose the face was stern, and across the left cheek a long scar made by a knife-cut bore witness to at least one fight for his life. Like most Indians he was beardless. When he smiled upon his daughter his grave face softened so that the stranger, who had reined his horse, gained an added confidence in his new friend. Beaumont said:

"Pakali, I found a traveller lost in the mud of Tishomingo. Let me introduce Mr. Stuart of Chicago."

The stranger was on the ground in an instant. He bowed very low before the girl, who saw that the white man was young and good-looking.

"Mr. Stuart, my distant kinsman, Mr. Dixon," said Beaumont, who had dismounted with a slowness that showed his weight was troublesome. Hattakowa and the stranger

shook hands. The Indian gazed upon the white man with forbidding hauteur. Stuart's corduroy costume, with cartridge belt and pistols in plain sight, aroused the Indian's contempt, although the corduroys clothed an athletic body. The stranger belonged to the extreme Saxon type. His closely-cropped light hair waved where it was parted near the middle of the forehead. His fair skin was slightly inclined to ruddiness. He wore glasses to help the sight of blue eyes, deep in colour, clear and well set. A small moustache hid the outline of lips, full and firmly closed. A cleft chin weakened a face that suggested good humour and frankness.

"Lem! Pete! Si! Isn't there a nigger on the place to take these horses?" called Beaumont in tones that aroused the servants in the whitewashed quarters back of the house. Two black boys ran across the wide, stony space that extended beyond the little patch of green lawn. Their master scolded them, and then tossed each a quarter as he led the way to the house. At the front door there waited a slender little white woman of middle age. She had a stately carriage and a sweet dignity.

"Welcome to Tishomingo," said Mrs. Beaumont, extending a delicate hand to the stranger.

"I feel as if I were intruding upon your hospitality," said Stuart.

"This is Moma Binna, a lodge for all," answered his hostess. "It is our privilege to give you welcome."

CHAPTER II

MOMA BINNA

THE large living room of Moma Binna retained the mud-chinked log walls that marked the boundaries of Beaumont's pioneer cabin, but they were almost hidden beneath bright blankets, skilfully tanned deer skins, and feathered war-bonnets, collected by the owner from the wild tribes of Oklahoma. Over the high mantel shelf on the stone chimney hung a buffalo head, and there was a gun rack in one corner. Several splint-bottomed rockers and a number of straight chairs with seats made of cowhide thongs were drawn up near the hearth upon which blazed a log fire. The heat was pleasant in the chill of the early spring evening. A shaded lamp, placed in the centre of a large, round table, shed a glow that, even when mingled with the firelight, failed to illuminate the distant corners of the high-raftered ceiling.

Into this living room Mrs. Beaumont ushered her guest, who could not disguise his quick scrutiny of the interior of the house, for folding doors revealed a handsomely furnished parlour, in which burned a second open fire.

"Is supper about ready?" asked Beaumont, seating himself upon a wooden settle while a negro boy took off his spurs. "We are as hungry as wolves."

Mrs. Beaumont gave assurance that the bell would ring in a few minutes. Calling a neat mulatto maid, she directed that Stuart be taken to a room on the south gallery. Pakali and Hattakowa went into the parlour, where they stood before the fire.

"You are frowning, Hattakowa," said Pakali. "You act as if you wished the stranger had not come."

"I do not like him," answered Hattakowa. "Something tells me he will bring trouble to Moma Binna."

"Did you see a crow flying over his head? Or did the dogs of Tishomingo howl, as he came up the hill?" Pakali asked the questions with a smile. "Hattakowa, you are trying to be too much an Indian when you pretend to be superstitious."

"You know I am what you call superstitious," Hattakowa answered. "My mother keeps me watching all the signs that used to guide the old squaws, and many of them I have found full of meaning."

"I like the stranger's looks," declared Pakali, and, when she saw that Hattakowa set his lips as if her words hurt him, she went to the piano. Touching the keys, softly she began to play, and presently, looking over her shoulder, she saw that there was no longer any resentment in the grave face of the man who loved her.

The supper gong rang twice before the stranger came into the parlour where Mr. and Mrs. Beaumont were waiting with Pakali and Hattakowa. When Stuart crossed the threshold he showed some embarrassment, for he noticed that his host had made a change of clothing, and that the younger Indian wore a well-cut coat and immaculate linen. Mrs. Beaumont's silk gown rustled as she turned to greet her guest.

"I must apologise for my corduroys," Stuart said. "I did not expect to need much luggage down here in the Territory."

Beaumont laughed good-naturedly.

"You thought we wore war paint in summer and red blankets in winter, didn't you?" he replied. "Well, we are accustomed to the Easterner's ideas that we are still savages."

"We have had visitors who asked to see the family tomahawk," Pakali remarked, lifting her pretty head proudly and showing her even teeth in a smile that was half

disdainful. She wore a white gown of soft material which brought out her rich colouring, and, even to a man's eye, it was evident that the costume was costly and fashionable.

A negro boy, in white coat and apron, threw open the door into the dining-room. When the party was seated at a wide table Stuart's attention was first attracted to a profusion of silver, oddly chased in a design of water lilies. A great bowl filled with crocuses occupied the centre of the damask cloth. Large china plates were heaped with hot biscuits, and an immense platter was laden with fried chicken. The negro boy served the food deftly, and Stuart, who prided himself upon his correctness of dress and manner, felt uncomfortable in his rough clothing, even though his host and hostess exercised the most delicate tact. Hattakowa, who sat opposite him, was moody and silent. The flash of a brilliant ruby, set in an odd gold ring, drew the stranger's attention to the young Indian's well-shaped hand. Again and again Stuart found himself gazing at the ring, and once or twice Hattakowa, detecting his frequent glances, gave him an unfriendly look.

"Eastern men know little about this part of the country," Stuart said, apologetically. "When my friend, a congressman from one of our middle western States, suggested that I should come down here to gather statistics for him, I was glad of the mission because I imagined I might have a taste of life in tents and tepees."

"You are more than half a century too late to behold us of the Five Nations in our barbaric state. The missionaries helped to civilise us Chickasaws and Choctaws long before we left Mississippi," Beaumont replied.

"I liked the missionary work here in the Territory so well that I decided to devote my entire life to one Indian," added Mrs. Beaumont, pausing to look over the silver teapot from which she was pouring a steaming draught.

" Mother has become a thorough Chickasaw," explained Pakali. " Not even Hattakowa is more proud of our tribal traditions."

" Yes, Mrs. Beaumont's chief regret is that she has no house name to bequeath to Pakali," Mr. Beaumont announced in jesting tones.

" House name? " questioned the stranger.

" According to the old Chickasaw custom the children of a family inherited the house name of the mother instead of that of the father." Beaumont picked up a silver salver and pointed to the engraved border.

" My mother's house name was Poncha-Toula, which meant water lily. According to the old order of things it would come down to me, but since we are civilised I bear the name of a French forefather, George Beaumont."

" Mr. Stuart probably will miss some of the luxuries of civilisation here in the Territory," Hattakowa said when the servant had removed the plates and had passed dishes containing fruits and cakes. " The white man has deprived the Indian of *o-ka humma,* the fire water that my people love too well."

" Can't you buy any liquor in the Territory? " Stuart asked in surprise.

" No, the government puts a heavy penalty upon the sale of any intoxicating beverage," explained Beaumont; " but there is a great deal of whisky smuggled in from Texas, and even from prohibition Kansas."

" The drug stores do an immense business in patent medicines," commented Hattakowa. " We have many chronic invalids—most of them white men—who buy remedies which contain alcohol."

Stuart studied Hattakowa's face, which was hard to read. Again the ring flashed as the brown left hand was raised to push back a long lock of hair.

" It was a disappointment to me to find that the Governor

of the Chickasaws does not live in Tishomingo," the stranger remarked presently. "I suppose it will be impossible to get at any of the records of the Nation unless he is here."

"All our officials live upon their farms, or ranches," Beaumont said. "The capitol is locked a greater part of the time, for the business of the Nation is not often urgent. But the Governor comes to Tishomingo at least once in three months."

"While you are waiting for the Governor you will have time to learn something about Chickasaw ways." It was Mrs. Beaumont who spoke. "I am always desirous that Eastern visitors shall have a chance to know the Indians of the Territory."

"It hurts Little Mother's feelings to have us classed as savages," said Pakali, who had taken small part in the conversation. Her manner was one of deference to her parents, to whom she accorded the privilege of monopolising their guest's attention.

"You must ride about the country as soon as the mud dries," her father remarked hospitably. "We have some good horses here at Moma Binna, although we do not say much about our stables when Hattakowa is with us."

"Hattakowa has the fastest horses in the whole Territory," Pakali said with much enthusiasm.

"I shall be pleased to show you over my place." Hattakowa saw that he was expected to extend an invitation to Stuart, and he gave it with ill-concealed reluctance.

Mrs. Beaumont rose from the table and passed into the living room. There she directed a servant to bring pipes and cigars from a cupboard which projected from the log wall.

"Our men always smoke here," she said. She motioned Stuart to one of the rocking chairs and Pakali put before him a finely woven flat basket which held cigars. Beaumont,

half reclining upon a well-worn leather sofa, lighted a pipe. Hattakowa leaned against the high mantel shelf. When Pakali brought the cigars to him he declined them.

The girl drew a wooden stool to the hearth. "If you have no objection I shall stay here," she said. "I always like the after supper talks with father."

The stranger expressed his pleasure in her company so effusively that Hattakowa scowled at him and a constraint fell upon the little group. During one of the pauses in the conversation the young Indian's ring, upon which the fire played, concentrated the stranger's attention so insistently that almost before he thought of what he was saying Stuart spoke of the gem.

"Mr. Dixon, may I see your ring?" he asked. "It is so unusual in colour and setting that I want to examine it."

Hattakowa did not offer to remove the ring from his finger. He simply held his hand near the lamp where the pale yellow gold of the setting and the depth of the stone could be seen.

"It is a ruby of great beauty. I covet it," said Stuart.

The Indian snatched his hand away. Proudly he drew himself to his full height.

"This is not one of the beads the white man can buy from the red man," he replied.

The stranger made a quick apology. Hattakowa gave but scant acknowledgment. The Indian soon requested the privilege of calling for a servant to bring his horse.

"You are not going home to-night," insisted Mrs. Beaumont, but Hattakowa would not be persuaded to stay. He found his hat, which hung upon a pair of antlers. Lem, the negro boy, came into the room, and, kneeling before Hattakowa, buckled on a pair of leggins. The young Indian commanded the servant to carry his saddlebags from a distant bedroom. Then he said good-night.

Pakali followed him out upon the gallery.

"Come again soon, very soon, Hattakowa," she called as he vaulted into the saddle.

At the sound of her soft southern voice, Hattakowa wheeled his horse, jumped to the ground, and was at her side in a moment.

"Pakali, to-day I told you that I love you. Will you not let me kiss you upon your lips?" he begged.

The girl trembled before him, for she felt a power in the man that made her afraid. She did not answer. She looked up into his face with questioning eyes.

"See how my love humbles me," he said. "It is my nature to take by force what I crave, yet I stand here before you pleading that you will permit me to touch your lips. Let the first kiss you give to any man be mine, Pakali, and in the years to come I will pay for it."

Hattakowa held out his arms to her, and, swayed by his earnestness, Pakali lifted her face to his. He drew her to him and, holding her close to his heart, kissed her. Gently he put her from him and went away, leaving her strangely agitated. She stood motionless until she was aroused by her mother's voice.

"Mr. Stuart is worried for fear he has offended Hattakowa, and I want you to tell him the story of the ring," Mrs. Beaumont said, when Pakali had returned to the living room.

The girl sought a seat in the shadow of the deep chimney, and, in an unsteady voice, protested that her father knew the story better than anyone else.

"The ruby is an heirloom," Beaumont said, refilling his pipe. "It came to Hattakowa from his great uncle Apushamatahah, the illustrious Choctaw chief. The ring has a queer history, for it was a gift from Edwin Forrest, the tragedian. It appears that when Forrest was less than twenty years old he was playing in New Orleans, where he fell in love with the company's leading lady, Miss Placide. It

was a desperate infatuation, and the ardent young suitor had a celebrated goldsmith make the ring that was to be the token of betrothal. Miss Placide refused the actor's heart and his ruby. Then Forrest sought to hide his grief in the woods. He made a friend of Apushamatahah and he fled to the Indian lodge in the wilderness of Mississippi, where he passed part of the summer of 1825. When he went away he gave the old chief the ruby, which is said to bring ill luck in love to all who possess it."

"I am glad it is impossible for me to own it then," Stuart asserted with emphasis, glancing involuntarily toward Pakali's corner.

Mrs. Beaumont rang for lights; and, after candles, placed in silver candlesticks, had been brought, she and Pakali said good-night.

CHAPTER III

THE DOGWOOD CALENDAR

STUART was awakened the next morning by the blowing of a wind that rocked the house. It was some time before he could remember just where he was and he lay lazily in the big oak bedstead, whence he looked about the well-furnished guest room of Moma Binna. His one candle had lighted the chamber but dimly the night before, and a picture that he had not then noticed caught his eye. It was a large crayon portrait of Pakali, and had been made when she was a child. The man studied the features, which were drawn with the hard lines employed by the artist of little skill, yet even the indifferent portrait showed the blending of two antagonistic races. The eyes had the solemn gaze that marks the Indian, and the corners of the mouth drooped with the serious curve which gives the look of sadness to the faces of the descendants of the North American aborigines. The hair was parted and hung in two braids that fell upon the sloping shoulders. The Pakali whom the white man had seen the evening before gave little hint of her descent from a savage people, but in the strangely prophetic way in which an infant face will sometimes foretell the adult characteristics, Pakali's portrait suggested tragedy.

Lem, who came in to build a fire upon the big andirons, interrupted Stuart's speculations concerning the Indian girl. The negro boy placed a pitcher of hot water upon the stand and asked if he could black " massa's " shoes. Stuart was again brought to an unpleasant remembrance of the limitations of his wardrobe. He sent away his one pair of boots with the injunction that they should be returned to him

immediately, and, after he had dressed hastily, he wrote a note ordering a trunkful of clothes to be sent to him without delay.

Breakfast was announced by Lem before Stuart was ready, and in the dining room the stranger found two guests waiting with the family. Mrs. Beaumont introduced him to Virginia Mattison, an Indian girl about Pakali's age, but of a much more pronounced Chickasaw type, and to her brother, Cole Mattison, a stalwart young man with a skin darker than that of the mulatto boy who stood behind Mrs. Beaumont's chair. Looking intently at Pakali when she gave him a cordial good-morning, Stuart thought he saw her lineage written upon her face, which was fascinating in its sweetness and freshness. The girl wore a red cloth waist, and the colour, so much in favour among barbaric peoples, made more striking her peculiar beauty. She turned to speak to one of her guests, and he noticed the symmetrical outlines of her small head upon which the heavy black hair was arranged with the simplicity of unconscious art. The soft tresses were parted in the middle and drawn loosely back to the crown of the head, where the shining coils were caught with an amber comb.

The servant brought a Bible to Mrs. Beaumont, who read a chapter, after which all knelt while she prayed. The stranger from civilisation was little accustomed to religious observances, and he dropped awkwardly to his knees. His thoughts wandered while his hostess offered a few simple petitions for divine guidance.

Breakfast was a merry meal, for Virginia Mattison had a vivacious wit. She paid little attention to the presence of the stranger. The brother and sister had been passing a fortnight in the Choctaw Nation, and they had much to say about the consternation among the fullbloods who had heard the rumour that the United States would soon apportion the land held in common by Indian citizens.

"The apportionment cannot come any too soon to please me," declared Cole Mattison. "I am tired of being a ward of Uncle Sam."

"Don't be too impatient, young man," cautioned Beaumont. "You may be sure that the Indians somehow will get the worst of it when Uncle Sam begins to divide the property he bestowed upon the Five Nations to be held by them, according to the terms of the treaty, 'As long as water runs and grass grows.'"

"Don't you want to hold your property in your own name?" inquired Stuart.

Beaumont's face assumed a stern look.

"My young friend touches me upon a sore spot," he said. "I have seen the corruption of the government representatives sent here to the Territory for too many years to believe that we Indians can receive anything like justice when our tribal inheritance is apportioned to us."

Stuart moved in his chair uneasily. He had a guilty feeling that he might be abusing the Indian's hospitality, inasmuch as his mission had a direct bearing upon the future allotment of lands. His patron, the congressman, was a man who could look a long way ahead, and, while the statesman had not explained his exact reason for wanting information gleaned from the records of the Five Nations, it was quite certain it would not be used in a manner altogether philanthropic. The congressman had not made a reputation for unselfish statesmanship. Fortunately Virginia turned the conversation away from a subject that suggested possible embarrassment.

"I want you all to come to Wauchula for our big church fair. It wouldn't be a success without Mrs. Beaumont, and none of you can make any acceptable excuses," she declared decidedly. "We have arranged it so that Pakali is to have the Tishomingo booth, and Mr. Beaumont is to serve as the auctioneer of Indian relics."

" Where will you get your Indian relics? " asked Beaumont, with a laugh that shook his heavy body.

" Oh, the relics are going to be jokes," Virginia explained. " We'll collect some worn out ready-made suits of clothes, some tin cans, and empty whisky flasks."

" Don't jest upon such a serious subject, Virginia," said Mrs. Beaumont, shaking her head. " What can you have in your relic booth? "

" Remnants of broken treaties with our white brothers," suggested Beaumont.

" Never mind, we shall have something for you to do. And you must bring Mr. Stuart with you," Virginia answered.

" Thanks for the invitation," said the stranger, " but I shall be gone long before your church fair opens."

" You will be here a month from now, if you stay to procure any figures from our public records," prophesied Beaumont. " I will promise you a trip to be remembered if you go to Wauchula with us."

The stranger smiled politely and murmured something about engagements in Chicago.

" You don't look like a man to give up any quest of importance," remarked his host. " When I asked you to come to my house I expected you to stay a month. You can make Moma Binna your headquarters and arrange your trips to Muscogee, Tahlequah, and other capitals so that you can return here at least once a week."

A maid servant whispered something to Beaumont, and he hastily drank his coffee.

" There is a delegation of fullbloods out in the living room," he said. " The Indians have come to see me about some trouble they are having in taking the census of Pontotoc county. If Mr. Stuart wants to meet the Honourable Jimmy Sunfish, a member of the legislature, here is his chance."

The family and guests followed Beaumont into the living room, where five fullbloods sat solemnly waiting. They were all introduced. Mr. Sunfish, evidently the spokesman, was stricken dumb at the sight of the stranger, and his companions, following his example, also were silent. One of the Indians was old. He leaned upon a stout cane, but his big head was held high, and his deeply lined face was grim in expression.

" This is John Oaktree, a descendant of Tushkaapela, the Warrior Helper," said Beaumont.

The old Chickasaw held out a shrivelled hand to Stuart, who spoke a few words and found that he was not understood.

All the fullbloods were comfortably dressed in the ill-fitting clothes that the white man sends to frontier merchants. Around their necks in place of collars they wore bright-coloured silk handkerchiefs. It was evident that the stranger embarrassed the Pontotoc delegation and Pakali took her friends out upon the wide gallery.

The wind still blew. The young trees were bending almost to the ground. The birds sought shelter, and over the outdoor world brooded a quiet broken only by the sound of the " norther " as it rushed through the pines and shook the windows of Moma Binna.

" See how the mud has dried," said Cole Mattison. " Virginia and I must start for Wauchula. We can make the halfway house long before sundown."

Virginia showed no indication of haste to leave Tishomingo. She drew Pakali aside so that she could speak alone with the girl.

" You men must excuse me," she said, with a wave of her hand. " I cannot go home without telling Lenore the very latest gossip about Mrs. Maury, who is trying to lead Wauchula society."

" Cannot you tell us, too? " Stuart asked. " I confess it

is a disappointment to hear that even in the Territory society has its rivalries."

The girls shook their heads, and Stuart was left to talk with Cole Mattison, who lighted a cigar and responded briefly to remarks addressed to him. Stuart soon exhausted the subject of the weather, but he found his companion so uncommunicative concerning the affairs of the Nation that he was glad to return to the subject of the "norther" and its uncomfortable suggestion of a tornado. The two young men were about the same age, but the Indian had so much of the stolidity for which his race is noted that his sullen face lacked the boyishness which was one of Stuart's chief charms. The white man's genial manner was beginning to have a softening effect upon his companion, when Virginia announced that she was ready to continue her journey to Wauchula.

Pakali and Stuart watched the brother and sister ride away. Then for a moment an embarrassed silence fell upon them. For the first time Pakali appeared to feel ill at ease with the stranger, and Stuart was quick to note her mood.

"You must not let me interfere with any of your plans," he said. "Although you have given me such cordial hospitality I know I am a trespasser upon your kindness." Something like a blush deepened the ruddy hue on his cheeks as he hastened to explain: "You see, you have taken me by surprise here in Tishomingo. I don't want to intrude—indeed I do not." He hesitated a moment, and then added: "But it is pleasant to have fallen into such good company."

"When the Indian opens his lodge to a stranger he does not offer a grudging welcome," answered Pakali. She looked up into his face and in a half-teasing tone said:

"We are quite accustomed to the white man's disappointment when he finds us living among some of the luxuries of civilisation that he has provided for himself. I always feel as if I owed an apology to such chance visitors as you because I am not a nineteenth-century Pocahontas."

"I beg your pardon. It was not courteous for me to express surprise concerning Tishomingo." Stuart apologised with such evident appreciation of his lack of delicacy that Pakali, smiling upon him indulgently, replied:

"The Indian maiden will show her forgiveness by taking the white man to one of her woodland haunts. Come, I want you to see how the water pours over the great boulders in Pennington Creek."

From a rustic bench on the porch she took up a broad-brimmed light felt hat and then led the way down the garden path to the edge of the bluff, whence she and Hattakowa had seen Stuart for the first time.

"Look down upon Tishomingo," she said, pausing to gaze upon the little village. On a distant hill rose the red-brick capitol, and along the main street an ox-team floundered in the mud. The trees, that were touched with the tender green of the early springtime, bent beneath the wind, which sighed as it rushed from mountain clefts to prairie wastes. The breeze ruffled the girl's dark hair and tossed her hat down the trail. Stuart and Pakali pursued the rolling sombrero until their descent became a romping game. When the hat was finally recovered they paused for breath upon the rustic bridge leading over Pennington Creek.

"From this point on we must proceed in true Indian fashion," said Pakali. "I will pick the way through the mud and you must follow in my exact footsteps."

"Will you give a warning war whoop, or something of the kind, when you are in danger of being mired?" asked the young man, gravely accepting Pakali's mood.

"We are not on the warpath," the girl answered. "This trail leads to my place of peace, and it is a mark of special favour for me to admit you to the little nook where I spend restful hours when the Chickasaw within me calls for outdoor life."

They had come to a sheltered spot where the rushing water

at flood time had hollowed out a wide space and then left it dry after many a large, round rock had been tossed aside. Upon one of the boulders Pakali seated herself. It was so high that she could look down upon Stuart, who leaned against one of the big willows that overhung the stream.

" If the Territory were what you imagined it to be I would be here grinding corn between two stones," remarked Pakali. " As I pounded the grain perhaps I would be dreaming of some red-skinned young brave off at the chase."

The girl leaned forward, resting her elbow upon her knee and supporting her chin upon her hand. The rushing of the waters made her voice seem far off, and, offering the excuse that he could not hear, Stuart climbed up close to her.

" Although you do not grind corn, there is nothing to prevent you from dreaming of the young brave," he said. " Mr. Dixon, whom you call by a strange Indian name, appears to be a man any woman would remember."

" You mean Hattakowa? He is my kinsman, almost my brother." Her manner forbade further comments concerning the Indian. Stuart waited for the girl to continue the conversation, but Pakali, who still retained enough of the Indian characteristics to be reticent when it best suited her purpose, appeared to be listening to the song of a mocking bird that dared to lift its voice above the sounding waters.

" It is not strange that you call this your ' place of peace.' " Stuart said presently. " One could easily forget the whole world here."

He was young, and his senses responded to the quickening impulse of the spring day. The golden hour alone with Pakali brought him near to nature in a strange way that stirred his pulses. The girl's beauty had in it the same mysterious charm that belongs to the early morning when the earth seems to have been purified. He saw her face with

its still childish outlines marked with an elusive sadness that made its sudden lighting by a chance smile little less than a transfiguration.

"I do not know much of your world to forget," answered Pakali. "From a St. Louis boarding school I had few glimpses of it. Twice I visited Kansas City just long enough to be glad when it was time to return to the Territory. Most of my knowledge has been gained from visitors like yourself —men who find us civilised Indians a rather astonishing type."

Pakali's eyes looked straight into Stuart's with the unflinching gaze that was to him her most unusual characteristic. He would have spoken, but she made a little gesture that silenced him.

"You must not try to explain just what impression we make upon you up there at Moma Binna," she hastened to say. "I liked you last night or I would not have brought you here to-day. If we are to be friends you must understand that I am proud of my Indian blood, that I have always in my heart a great pride that I am one of the Chickasaws." She smiled, and added, mischievously: "You know we, who are descended from the aborigines, are the only real American aristocrats."

Stuart slipped down to where he could stand before Pakali and, with uncovered head, he waited while she continued:

"We who mingle in our veins the blood of the Indian and the blood of the white man belong to neither race. Many of us have your education; we are trained in all your artificial manners, and we have some of the advantages that belong to civilisation, but there is the tragedy of it all! Only last night Hattakowa accused me of having become altogether a white woman in my feelings, yet if I were really a white woman I should not speak thus to you. I would pretend that I do not know just how much we puzzle you."

"You do puzzle me," answered Stuart, "but you do more.

You make me give you the best homage a man can offer a woman. I shall be happy indeed if you will let me be your friend."

Pakali's clear eyes again met his, but she saw in the man's face something that made her look away from him.

"At first I thought I would make you uncomfortable by keeping before you the fact that I am an Indian, but now I want you to understand my people," she continued. "Some days you will hardly remember that I am not one of the girls you know in Chicago, but at other times you will find me a Chickasaw, and I mean to make you like the Chickasaw better than the other girl."

"I am sure I shall like the Chickasaw better than any other girl I have ever seen," declared Stuart.

Pakali descended from her high place.

"Don't make pretty speeches or we can never be friends," she warned. "Go up there on the bank of the creek and bring me some branches of dogwood. I want to show you how the Indians used to count the days."

Stuart clambered to the top of the overhanging bank. When he returned with the dogwood, Pakali broke the slender branches into small pieces.

"Each of these is a day," she said. "With them we shall mark the time you have to spend in the Chickasaw Nation."

"You are breaking too many," cautioned Stuart, who was standing beside her as she arranged the sticks on a little ledge of rock. "I wish there might be any number of days for me here, but——"

"You do not understand," explained Pakali. "It is etiquette for me to prepare many sticks so that you shall know we want you to stay a long time in our village. Here; I mark the first day with this."

She put one stick on the ledge in a spot where the moss grew.

" See, there is a flower on the branch," said Stuart. " That must be a good omen."

Pakali put down a second stick.

" That should also bear a flower," the young man remarked, and, reaching over the girl's shoulder, he substituted a bit of branch that still bore a bud. " All my days in which you have a part must be marked by a special sign."

Their hands touched, and Pakali forgot to reprove him for his pretty speech.

CHAPTER IV

ARNOLD STUART'S MISSION

ARNOLD STUART had passed a week in Tishomingo before he began to think seriously of fulfilling his mission to the Territory. The hospitality of Moma Binna was so perfect that he was treated as if he belonged to the Chickasaw Nation. He had the rare adaptability of character which made him welcome everywhere. His was a nature that expected the best things of life. He was a man of wide experience, for he had lived much in his less than thirty years. It was said of him that he was always lucky. While he had not been born to great wealth, he belonged to the large class of Americans which enjoys all the advantages that money can buy. His father, while a member of the Chicago Board of Trade, had provided lavishly for the wants, real and fancied, of a son whose easy-going nature accepted what was given him with the sort of gratitude which encouraged larger indulgences. The elder Stuart had died suddenly, leaving an estate that would support a widow who enjoyed, in a dignified way, the gaiety of foreign capitals.

On leaving college Arnold had found that what he chose to call his "career" opened in a promising manner, for he was permitted to be the fourth member of an old and prosperous law firm, the senior partner of which was associated in large speculations with a congressman of a middle western State. During his first term in the House of Representatives, Elisha Fordham had been a member of the committee on Indian affairs. Congressman Fordham attracted national attention by a speech advocating the speedier apportionment of land to all Indian tribes. Statistics, gathered casually,

had interested him in what he termed the " ultimate possibilities " of the severalty system. The fact that that system enables the wards of the government gradually to dispose of the remnant of their diminishing inheritance added to Judge Fordham's interest, and he engaged Stuart's firm to make certain investigations for him.

It seemed a wise move to obtain at first hand more exact data concerning the Five Nations that had been exploited as having more wealth per capita than any other class of people in the United States. Therefore, Arnold Stuart had been chosen to gather statistics which might be of great value at some future time. Although there was nothing underhand or irregular in the duty assigned to him, the young man, who had started southward with much enthusiasm, soon began to feel a certain amount of distaste for the task he had accepted. He frankly told George Beaumont why he had come to the Territory, and the fine old Indian was quick to make him understand that much good might be done if the lawmakers dealt fairly with the red man.

Even though Beaumont did all in his power to facilitate any effort that might be made to gain information concerning the Chickasaws, Arnold Stuart showed little inclination to spend many hours a day with the men who had helped to make history in the Indian Territory. Pakali lured him into all sorts of pleasant pastimes. On the day when he could have heard reminiscences of the enforced migration of the tribes from Mississippi, a horseback ride made him forget Congressman Fordham's anxiety to receive an extended report from him. The day Sammy Hotgun, a fullblood, came in to tell of a new grievance, a long walk up hill and down, through little stretches of wood and over broad expanses of grass, to the oldest building in the Chickasaw Nation, had been planned. Although Hotgun, who was a member of the Indian legislature, was in a most communicative mood, it

was impossible for the young man to fix his attention upon the subject of lost cattle and stolen horses. It happened that the Governor of the Nation rode in to dine at Moma Binna on the Sunday Stuart accompanied Mrs. Beaumont and her daughter to the little wooden church, where they remained during a luncheon that was served to the young Indians who stayed to Sunday School. Ordinarily Arnold Stuart was not inclined to attend religious services, but he responded with much alacrity to Mrs. Beaumont's missionary efforts in his behalf. He knew that Pakali played the melodeon, and he was quite willing to sit for an hour or two where he could enjoy the privilege of studying every movement of the girl, who fascinated him more and more as he saw her in the close association her home afforded him. It was a little Methodist meetinghouse, and enjoyed the distinction of being the only church in Tishomingo. It had no regular minister, but once a month a Wauchula pastor came to preach to the half-dozen families.

Stuart's ears were deaf to the minister's prayer. The Scriptures failed to fix his attention. His eyes wandered from face to face as he looked down upon the congregation from a side seat, which served as the Beaumont pew. Among the fifty persons was a large proportion of men, some of them fullbloods. All the men were dressed in ill-fitting, ready-made suits, but they wore clean linen. It was a surprise to the stranger to notice that the women showed little of the barbaric love of colour. Most of the girls had eyes of great beauty that relieved the plainness of heavy-featured faces. All the shades of colour, from the white of the Caucasian to the reddish brown of the Indian, were to be seen in the congregation. On a bench, occupied by one halfbreed family, a golden-haired, pink-cheeked little girl sat beside her small brother who had the deep, rich brown of a fullblood. For the first time Stuart realised that in Indian Territory amal-

gamation had reached a point where the solution of the Indian problem, so far as the Territory was concerned, could be easily foreseen.

Pakali led the first hymn. Her fresh young voice imparted to the droning tune a charm the young man had never discovered in any sacred music. He listened with a reverence new to his volatile nature.

Mrs. Beaumont shared her hymnbook with him, and behind its cover whispered that he must sing. He scanned the words of simple trustfulness in divine power, and then, beholding in Pakali's eyes as they gazed upward, a look of faith and holy aspiration that gave him a new revelation of her character, it seemed a sacrilege to lift his voice in words that meant nothing to him.

It was mid-afternoon when Mrs. Beaumont, Pakali, and Stuart returned to Moma Binna, where they found Mr. Beaumont and Henry Sands, the Governor of the Chickasaw Nation, enjoying their pipes in a cool corner of the veranda. Governor Sands was a short, compactly built fullblood, with a broad, weatherbeaten face. He had the high cheek-bones and the heavy jaw of the Indian. His small, black eyes contradicted the stranger's first impression that the man was stupid. The Chickasaw Governor gave Stuart a hearty greeting, and was soon deeply engrossed in discussing the object of the young man's visit to the Territory. After they had passed an hour together in a conversation which made Stuart realise that, after all, his errand to Tishomingo carried with it tremendous possibilities, Pakali, who had sat silently gazing out upon the hills, rose suddenly with the exclamation: "There is Hattakowa!" She ran down the path to meet her kinsman as he rode up the driveway.

"I am so glad you have come," the girl exclaimed, as Hattakowa dismounted.

"I stayed away as long as I could, Pakali," the Indian said in his low, solemn voice. "My reason told me to stay

far from you, but my heart longed for you. I have not counted the days since I last came to Moma Binna, but it seems as if a twelvemonth had gone by." His eyes hungrily scanned Pakali's face as he stood with his arm thrown over the neck of his horse.

"And to me, too, the time has seemed long," the girl responded. "I have lived and learned much in the last fortnight. The stranger has brought some of his world to me. He is not like other white men, and I have wished that you might know him well."

"Pakali, when a man is not like other men to a girl, he is perhaps the one who will rule her life," Hattakowa answered.

"Foolish cousin! To me you are different from all the world and yet you will never rule my life. I mean to guide my own destiny." She tossed her head with a pretty air of independence.

"Remember that while you are guiding your destiny you are controlling mine," warned Hattakowa. "Have I not told you that you are my Star Woman?"

"Come up on the porch, Hattakowa. They are talking politics, and you cannot be sentimental any more," Pakali commanded.

"How well you have learned the white woman's trick of jesting with a man!" the Indian exclaimed, as he led his horse toward the house. "And yet, even though you have the ways of the people I hate, still you are to be Aiah-nichih-Choyoh."

Hattakowa met Stuart with a cold politeness that but thinly veiled his hostility. He drew a chair close to Governor Sands, and the contrast between the two Indians was brought out strongly. The fullblood lacked the education of the halfbreed. Governor Sands was twenty-five years older than Hattakowa. He was a type of the Chickasaw of an earlier time, and represented the results of a gradual

evolution. He was a man of few words and he made it plain that, while he cherished little bitterness concerning the white man, he was ready to defend what he called his rights.

"Like my friend, Mr. Beaumont, I belong to the Non-progressive party here in the Chickasaw Nation," he explained. "My younger friend, Mr. Dixon, is also of our party, but our political reasons are not the same. Mr. Beaumont and I are two bridle-wise old horses that want to trot along in the same old rough roads, because we know they are safe. But Dixon is a thoroughbred who fears he will be driven by the white men our Indian wit calls Break-In-Rich, Tom-Needs-It, and Jay-Gouge-All."

"Tom-Needs-It cannot have my ranches if I can help it," declared Hattakowa. "I know he has a big pull at Washington, for he sits in Congress, and no doubt is a member of the Committee on Indian Affairs."

Stuart's face flushed an angry red. He cast an indignant look at the young Chickasaw, but Hattakowa calmly lighted a cigar. After an uncomfortable pause, the remark was allowed to pass without a challenge, for Stuart was too well bred to start an unpleasant argument with a relative of his host. Instead, he did something that was a more severe retaliation than any other he could have planned. He excused himself to Mr. Beaumont and Governor Sands and took Pakali away to the garden, where there was a rustic bench, whence they could watch the sunset together.

Pakali was silent, or spoke little, while she sat with Stuart in the afterglow of the southern sunset. The young man furtively watched her and wondered, with a pang of jealousy, whether a closer tie than that of kinship bound her to the Chickasaw-Choctaw whose personality was evidently forceful and magnetic, since even the taciturn Governor had shown him respect and deference. Pakali's manner invariably forbade any discussion of Hattakowa. She ignored the

Indian's rudeness to the white man, appeared content to pass a quiet half hour watching the sky, while she replied at random to Stuart's questions concerning Governor Sands.

As evening came on one horseman after another rode up the hill from the village, and two or three vehicles followed them to Moma Binna. Stuart saw the negro servants lead the horses away to the stables, and he guessed that the advent of the tribal leader had brought together some of the principal men of the Nation. Presently light streamed from all the windows of Moma Binna, and Lem came out to announce that supper was served.

"You will have the chance to see all sorts of Chickasaws to-night," said Pakali, rising quickly. "I quite forgot that I should have helped mother welcome our self-invited guests. You know we Indians always feel sure of ready hospitality whenever we go to one another's houses, and so all who come to see father expect to break bread with him."

When they entered the dining room Stuart saw that the long table had been stretched out to accommodate twenty persons. At the foot, behind the water-lily-chased tea set, Mrs. Beaumont presided. At the head sat Mr. Beaumont, with the Governor at his right. Opposite the Governor Hattakowa had his place. Crystal bowls of roses decorated the table, and candles set in handsome candelabra shed a soft radiance upon as peculiar an assemblage as Stuart had ever beheld. Among the Indians were men who were proud to measure even one-thirty-second part of their blood as an inheritance from aboriginal ancestry. Cole Mattison and his father, Peter Mattison, sat on one side of the table with a fullblood named Samuel Jenkins. The Honourable Jimmy Sunfish was made conspicuous by his evident discomfort while attired in best clothes, which included a very stiff celluloid collar without a necktie. John Oaktree, the old Indian who with Jimmy Sunfish had composed part of the

Pontotoc delegation that came to Moma Binna the day after Stuart's arrival, had the seat of honor next to Mrs. Beaumont.

For a moment or two after the appearance of Pakali and Stuart there was evident constraint. The fullbloods most ill at ease concealed their embarrassment by eating ravenously of the good things offered them by the negro waiters. Contrary to the Eastern custom, most of the food was displayed upon the table, but the service was as perfect as if it belonged to a fashionable country house on the Atlantic coast. It is true that some of the fullbloods ignored the presence of napkins, and used their knives with an expertness that was now and then uncomfortably suggestive of unpleasant incidents in United States history, but every man conducted himself with a dignity that was impressive to a stranger. John Oaktree had spoken several sentences in the Chickasaw language, and it was evident that only one or two at the table could understand him. Governor Sands acted as his interpreter.

"The spirit of Tushkaapela, the Warrior Helper, causes our friend, John Oaktree, to resent the growing power of the squaw men," said the Governor. "He predicts that the Choctaws will regret the day they let the squaw men sit in their legislature. The squaw man will make it easy for his white brothers to drive good bargains when the red man's lands are divided."

"It is due to the squaw men who have come from the South that we Indians will be compelled to share our heritage with the negroes we once held as slaves," said Beaumont. "Most of the squaw men belong to the class called 'poor white trash,' and their forefathers never owned slaves. But they have been willing to share their plantations with the black men. We Chickasaws lost our slaves in the war, and long ago we recognised the wisdom of emancipation. But why should we give up a share of our property when we are

the only former slaveholders from whom the government demanded such a sacrifice?"

"'Why' is a question we Indians never should ask," said Hattakowa, with a curl of his thin lips. "If we pondered upon that question, we might become mad enough to rebel against injustice, even though experience has taught us we are forever vanquished."

"Dixon should have lived two hundred years ago," laughed Cole Mattison. "When he talks, one expects to see him begin to sharpen his scalping knife."

"You deserve to be counted out of the Chickasaw Nation," Hattakowa retorted hotly, "for in feeling you do not belong to us."

"I hope to be counted among those who are civilised," Mattison said, tauntingly.

"Don't be too hasty, young man," cautioned the elder Mattison. "My son and I acknowledge an ambition to become full citizens of the United States. So, too, does Samuel Jenkins. But why don't you speak for yourself, Jenkins?"

The fullblood, to whom the appeal was made, was a wrinkled, shrivelled man, past middle age. He had a shrewd face, and he looked through half closed, watery eyes.

"It come natural for some to learn when they was stamped on a few times," he said, brokenly. "I not one to grunt and wait to be walked on more. I was teach that white man must have the Territory."

"I have heard that Attorney See-My-Fee has argued much with Jenkins," said Governor Sands.

All the Indians laughed heartily, except Peter and Cole Mattison.

"When I was to Muscogee one lawyer was hold counsel with me," admitted Jenkins, who evidently had the traditional lack of humour.

"And did you meet the lawyer's employers, Break-In-

Rich, Tom-Needs-It, and Jay-Gouge-All?" inquired Mr. Beaumont.

"I know none of those gentlemen," replied Jenkins, who was beginning to look angry.

Again there was a laugh.

"Have some of my currant jam, Mr. Jenkins," Mrs. Beaumont hastened to urge, from behind the silver urn.

The currant jam was passed, and the conversation drifted to less inflammatory topics than land allotment. It was Stuart who drew out reminiscences of earlier days when few white men trespassed upon the Territory. Mr. Beaumont recalled childhood memories of the journey from Mississippi, and Governor Sands translated John Oaktree's story of his first buffalo hunt. When the candles were burning low, Hattakowa, forgetting the presence of Stuart, told of his first resentment against the white man.

"It was in the days when my cousin Lenore, whom we of the family call Pakali, and I went to school together at Boggy Depot," he said. Looking across the table his eyes met Pakali's, but he went on as if she were not present. "We were little children then. Pakali was eight and I five years older. The white teachers had obtained the school contract from the government because they had put in the highest bids. The Chickasaw Nation paid for the education of its boys and girls, and we were housed in a place that was not fit for cattle. We were given little instruction, and we were punished cruelly. Starved and beaten and neglected, I learned to hate the idea of education. We boys, who had negro servants at home, were compelled to work in the fields when we ought to have been at our books. The girls, more tenderly reared than many a white child, were put to the most menial tasks. Pakali washed dishes and scrubbed floors. They made her carry great pails of water from the well, until one day I cursed the hypocrite who pretended that he was civilising us. One of the girls' studies was em-

broidery. More than half the days were passed over muslin curtains which were sold for high prices in St. Louis shops. There came a day when Pakali was discovered neglecting her embroidery in order that she might read a book. The woman—who, by the way, was the wife of the white Pharisee of a pedagogue—struck the eight-year-old child over the head and called her a 'lazy little savage, meaner than a nigger.' I had been sent to the sewing room upon an errand and heard this insult. Though I am an Indian, it was impossible even then for me to strike a woman. I threw a pail of water upon the contemptible creature, and I made her listen while I told her how she and her husband appeared to a Chickasaw boy. The incident gave Pakali and me a vacation, but it eventually put an end to the rule of the two dishonest teachers who had made a great deal of money out of their Boggy Depot venture."

Hattakowa had told his story with a simplicity which showed much reserve feeling. A little pause followed its close. The candles near the speaker were flickering, and his face was in the shadow, but Stuart saw that his eyes were fixed upon Pakali, as if he had forgotten the presence of all except the girl.

"No one here will think I have meant to boast of boyish chivalry," Hattakowa added suddenly. As he pushed back the heavy hair from his forehead, Stuart caught the gleam of the ruby ring on Hattakowa's hand, and he quickly turned away lest the Indian might see that he noticed it again.

"The candles are burning out. Let us go into the living room." It was Pakali who spoke to her mother. Mrs. Beaumont rose from the table, and when the party had reassembled in the living room, the young girl was missing.

CHAPTER V

PAKALI TELLS A STORY

FATE in the shape of a letter from Elisha Fordham, the congressman who had caused Stuart's mission to the Territory, awoke the visitor at Moma Binna to a sense of his shortcomings as a confidential agent. From his middle western State Mr. Fordham inquired why certain important data had not been forwarded to him. Stuart was lounging upon the veranda when a small negro boy brought the letter. He was waiting for Pakali, who had promised to drive with him. Looking back upon the last fortnight, the young man suddenly realised that he had passed most of his time waiting for Pakali, when he was not actually with her. He had put off a trip to Muscogee for no reason except that he was enjoying the weeks in Tishomingo. There were whole days when he had forgotten everything except what pertained to Pakali and Moma Binna.

Arnold Stuart threw away his cigar and paced up and down the veranda. He had sent to the congressman some valuable information concerning the Chickasaws. For a moment he tried to make himself believe that it was at least an honest return for four weeks' salary, which had been sent punctually to him. He was inclined to indulge in self-deception. In order to feel at peace with the world he liked to justify himself. Although his mind dwelt upon the fact that the reports he had written contained much which would have been impossible to procure except through the friendship of leading men of the Nation, he knew he could not safely procrastinate another day.

" I must start for Muscogee this afternoon," he announced

to Pakali, who drove a little basket phaeton up to the door, and commanded Stuart to take his place beside her.

"Why are you so suddenly tired of this Indian tepee?" she asked, glancing at him from beneath her broad-brimmed hat.

"Why have I lingered so long in Moma Binna? is the question," he replied, looking at her with a meaning she tried to ignore by paying attention to her pony.

"I have just received a letter that made me realise how nearly you have caused me to be unfaithful to a business trust. Do you know that a congressman waits while you lure me away from musty records and old documents?"

"You do not mean that you must go?" the girl said, with a little tremble in her voice. "I—I thought you were only jesting, for, whenever I refuse to humour you in some foolish whim, you threaten to go away."

Pakali held her chin very high and pretended to be indifferent.

"Threaten you, Miss Beaumont? I am not such an egotist as to suppose that you would fear to know the time of my going."

The pony, which had started out by trotting briskly, experimented with a slow walk, but Pakali paid no attention to him, and instead amused herself by playing with the buckle on the lines.

"I suppose you are never coming back to Tishomingo?" The girl gained courage to look her companion in the face. Stuart had taken off his hat, and for the first time in many days she saw him as the white man, who belonged not to her race. His fair hair curled upon his broad, white brow. His clear-cut features had a delicacy that was lacking in the Indian. His blue eyes looked through glasses, a distinguishing mark of the civilised man.

"I will come if you will let me," Stuart promised. Looking at Pakali, Stuart, who was an impulsive man, found it

hard to keep back words which would let her know that she had become much more than a passing acquaintance.

Pakali had had time to regain her self-possession.

"You tell me your coming back depends upon me," she said, with a taunting smile. "The white man is not ruled by the Indian. You know there will always be a welcome for you at Moma Binna, for is it not a 'lodge for all'?"

"Moma Binna has become an enchanted palace to me," Stuart answered. "One versed in magic dwells there."

"It has been said that Mammy 'Liza, my old nurse, is a witch, but you have not even seen her, for she has been ill ever since you came to Tishomingo."

Pakali whipped up the pony and added, with a little catch in her breath: "Do you know Mammy 'Liza warned me the night you arrived that a white chief came carrying trouble to Moma Binna?"

"If I thought that my visit to the Territory would bring anything but good to you and your people I should feel that death was too good for me," the young man declared, fervently. For a second they looked into each other's eyes, and the girl read something in Stuart's that caused her to stop the pony beneath a clump of trees.

"Let us gather some of the yellow sunflowers that grow along the road," she said, jumping lightly from the phaeton, and beginning to tie the pony to a drooping oak limb.

Before Stuart could reach her she was plucking the sunflowers. He stopped to watch her as she stood among the yellow blossoms, which brought out the clear tones of her dark skin. Afterward in his dreams he often saw her as she looked that day. She wore a gown of cream white material, simply made. Her broad-brimmed hat was pushed back from the shining black hair parted over her forehead.

"Please carry these flowers to the phaeton," Pakali said,

" and then I will show you the swinging seat the grape-vine has formed beneath the oak."

After Stuart had done her bidding, she made a place for him on a log, which she brushed carefully with a bunch of sunflowers.

" You must sit there while I enjoy my grape-vine swing," she directed. Swaying gently among the vines, she began to talk rapidly, as if she desired to prevent him from saying something that might be embarrassing.

" Perhaps you do not know that the grape-vine is connected with one of the Indian legends which accounts for our first appearance in this outer world," she said. " Once the red men lived in a large cavern under ground. A grape-vine extended its roots down to their village, and one day a little streak of sunshine appeared among the entangled offshoots of the giant roots. Some of the most adventurous of the Indians climbed up the vine and were so delighted with the sight of the bright outside world, which they found rich in every kind of fruit, that they resolved to go forth into the upper regions. Men, women, and children ascended the vine until half the nation had reached the surface. Two sisters, the most beautiful maidens in the tribe, started to follow those who sought the light. Both were exceedingly rich in the trinkets the primitive women used for personal adornment. When the maidens began to climb, the vine that had borne the weight of half the tribe swayed dangerously. One of the maidens took off her stone anklets and armlets and threw them away. Still the vine bent alarmingly. Then she cast from her many necklaces made of rare pebbles. Without any of her precious ornaments she reached the outside world, but her sister, who would not give up her trinkets, climbed only part way, when the vine broke beneath her weight, leaving her and half the nation forever imprisoned in the earth."

" What became of the beautiful maiden? " inquired Stuart.

" Does not the legend tell what happened to her after she reached the sunlight? "

" Yes, she is said to have found great joy and great sorrow."

Pakali glanced at her companion, who took the liberty of leaving his place on the log in order to sit close to the grapevine that had suggested the old legend to the Indian girl.

" Tell me about the great joy that the maiden found," said Stuart. " You know I don't like to hear about unpleasant things, so you may omit what the legend says about the sorrow."

" I cannot tell you about the joy without mentioning the sorrow," Pakali answered, giving him a little questioning glance. " You see, a white man brought both to the maiden, and I think I would rather not finish the story."

" You must tell me every word of it now," insisted Stuart, " for my curiosity is aroused."

" Well, in the land of the sunlight the maiden one day saw a white man whom she worshipped as a god, because she believed him to be one of the children of the sun. When she knelt before him, with her face to the ground, he raised her up and told her that he was earth-born like herself. Then the maiden loved him."

" Surely she set a good fashion to her people. I wonder if Indian maids often love white men now," interrupted Stuart.

" Not if they learn wisdom from the legend," declared Pakali, " for when the maiden left her people to follow the white man she was happy until they came to a wonderful city, where the gates opened, and the white man went in alone, leaving the Indian girl to die as she wandered back through the forest in search of her tribe."

Stuart rose to his feet. Standing before Pakali, he said: " Have you been thinking of this legend all these weeks

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that we have been together? And now that I am going away do you take this means of letting me know how little faith you put in the friendship of a white man?"

"When I began the legend I did not mean to tell it all, but somehow it told itself." The girl left her grape-vine seat and walked a few steps away. "As we drove out here you made the pretty speeches that the white man uses when he addresses the women of his own race. The Indian knows that they mean nothing. It is easier for me to make you understand that by telling you the legend."

"You shall not think so meanly of me. You must listen to me now." Stuart advanced toward her and put out his hand as if he would touch her, but she retreated from him.

"There is nothing that you can say to me excepting good-bye. You forget that I am an Indian, and therefore different from the girls you have known all your life. Until to-day I did not know how much your friendship had come to mean to me." She held out her hand to him. "Good-bye. I thank you for many pleasant hours. When I go down to my nook on Pennington Creek I shall mark to-day with a shrivelled stick." She laughed in a nervous way.

The young man took her hand and held it fast. "You cannot get away now," he said. "You must hear that you have made me hold you as one who is far above any girl in all my world."

"Remember that every word you say now must be only a humiliation," faltered Pakali, "for I shall know my legend has made you feel the need of making protestations that I should not hear. The Indian woman is more frank than the white woman, therefore do not judge me harshly when you measure me according to your standard." She proudly drew away from him, and he saw that there were tears in her eyes.

"Good-bye," she said again. "You must drive home

alone, for I am going to the house of a friend who lives just over the hill. They will take me back to Moma Binna after you are gone."

Before Stuart could reply to her she had run up the hill. He saw her stand for a moment at the crest of the hill to look back at him. Then she disappeared.

CHAPTER VI

THE RIDE TO WAUCHULA

AFTER Stuart went away from Moma Binna Pakali found that the days seemed dull and colourless. Every member of the household appeared to miss the white man, who had become so much a part of the family life that his absence made a perceptible difference in the daily routine. In the evening, when George Beaumont smoked his pipe out on the veranda, he declared frequently that he missed the young man who had shown a rare intelligence in discussing politics. With a sigh Mrs. Beaumont said that he had brought a breath of her girlhood home with him. "Not that I ever really long for my old Eastern surroundings," she made haste to explain, as she let her crocheting fall from her hand, "but it is refreshing now and then to meet a man who has the polish of an older civilisation than ours here in the Territory."

Pakali listened to these remarks without adding any comments. The summer evenings brought to her a sense of loneliness never before experienced in the Territory she loved because it was her birthplace. As she watched the crimson afterglow fade from the cloudless sky, she wondered whether she would ever see Arnold Stuart again. Her reason told her that he was not likely to return to Tishomingo, but in her heart was the hope that in some way he would be brought back to her. She did not try to analyse her feelings, for all her life it had been impressed upon her that the white man was treacherous, and that he belonged to a different race from hers.

George Beaumont, whose spirit was the most liberal in the whole Nation, had often preached this as the only safe creed

for the Indian, but he had never failed to discriminate in judging strangers from the States. He had shown an unusual confidence in Arnold Stuart, but when he bade farewell to the young man he had taken it for granted that the acquaintance ended at the doorstep of Moma Binna.

Several days after Stuart's departure two brief notes from the stranger came to Moma Binna. In one, addressed to Mr. and Mrs. Beaumont, Stuart expressed his appreciation of their hospitality. The other told Pakali in a single line that his thoughts travelled back to her every hour as he rode far away from Tishomingo. The girl read the note many times after she had stolen away to her nook by the creek. She felt a pang of disappointment because it held out no promise of a future meeting, and because it did not even express a wish that some day they might again be brought together. Pakali went to the little cleft in the rock where she had put the sticks with which she had marked the days of Stuart's sojourn in Moma Binna. She counted them carefully. They numbered forty. As she lifted the first one from its place a withered blossom fell from it. Going down close to the edge of the creek she gathered some smooth stones, which she carefully fitted into the little niche, thus securely sealing her calendar of precious days so that it might be undisturbed.

Fortunately, preparations for the church fair at Wauchula presently engrossed the time of Mrs. Beaumont and Pakali. More than a fortnight they worked diligently for what was to be the most ambitious public entertainment ever given in the Chickasaw Nation. As she altered her costume—a beaded buckskin skirt and loose jacket, lent to her from the collection of heirlooms treasured by Hattakowa's mother—Pakali remembered that Virginia Mattison had urged Stuart to attend the bazaar. Everything that was done at Moma Binna recalled memories of the white man, and she was conscious that the heartache she felt was not altogether explained when

she told herself that she felt the need of congenial companionship.

The heat of the Indian Territory summer came on suddenly. At midday the sun scorched the grassy plains and withered the trees. In the fields the cotton stalks grew tall. The dusty roads were little travelled. Pennington Creek shrank in its rocky course, and the sound of its flowing waters diminished from a roar to a gentle murmur. Although Wauchula was only thirty miles distant from Tishomingo, Mr. and Mrs. Beaumont decided to devote part of two days to the journey. The best team of horses and a comfortable two-seated carriage were selected for the trip, but Pakali insisted that she should be permitted to ride her pony. It was agreed that they should start at sundown in order to reach the halfway house at bedtime.

From the veranda Pakali listlessly watched Mammy 'Liza and Lem load the carriage with cakes and other contributions for the fair.

" This Sunday School bazaar business is more trouble than a cattle round-up," Beaumont grumbled, good-naturedly, as he came around the corner of the house. " If I didn't have to see the managers of my cotton gin I shouldn't have the courage to go to Wauchula this hot weather."

" I wish we could all stay at home," said Pakali.

Beaumont stopped to look at his daughhter with keen scrutiny.

" Why, what's the matter? " he asked, putting his arm around her and drawing her to him. " I hope you are feeling well. Now that I think of it you've been rather out of spirits for the last two weeks."

" I am only lazy, father," Pakali answered, affectionately patting his scarred cheek. She raised herself upon tiptoe to kiss him, when, over his shoulder, she saw something that made her heart beat with a quickened throb.

Stuart had ridden up the hill and was dismounting near

the carriage where her mother was superintending the servants. Turning from his daughter, Beaumont discovered the white man and went forward to add his welcome to Mrs. Beaumont's greetings.

Pakali stood where her father had left her. She had tried to imagine how it would be if Arnold Stuart came back, but now that he was not more than a hundred yards from her she lacked the strength to go to him. Trembling she waited until he should finish explaining his return to her parents. She could not hear what he said, but when he had taken her hand he spoke softly to her as if he were answering the call of her heart as it had been heard across the rolling plains and rising hills in the weeks of his absence.

"I could not stay away from you, Pakali," he confessed, seeking in her eyes the assurance that she had missed him. She met his gaze with the steady look that had often disconcerted him, but he saw that the soul of the woman had awakened. The girl made no answer.

"When you left me there by your grapevine seat you ceased to be Miss Beaumont to me," Stuart continued. "Then I knew that I could not go out of your life, and every hour since then I have had the name of Pakali on my lips. Three days ago I turned my horse's head toward Tishomingo. I have ridden at a reckless speed all the days and much of the nights since then. Tell me that you are glad to see me."

"I am glad," she answered, simply.

It was the sunset hour when Stuart on a fresh mount rode with Pakali behind the carriage which led the way to Wauchula. The quiet of the summer evening soothed the girl, who had been in a state of happy excitement since she had heard Stuart's few words, so full of meaning. They were going toward the west, and for a long time neither spoke. The wavering, dusty highway, stretching from the Chickasaw capital, passed over rolling hills and through little

stretches of woodland. As they emerged from an arch of trees Stuart stopped, as if something had happened to his saddle girth, but when he had dismounted he put a detaining hand upon the bridle of the girl's pony, and, going around to the left side where he could stand close to her, he said:

"Pakali, as I travelled back to you I tried to understand just what you might mean to me through all my life. I don't know when I discovered that I loved you, but I did not realise until I left you that in all my ambitions, in all my old associations, there is nothing compared to the desire to claim you as my wife." He spoke as one who had weighed his words. He gave utterance to his heart's desire with the solemnity of a man who had come to a great decision.

"Pakali, do you think you could love me enough to go with me to my far off city? Could you trust me not to close the gates until I have taken you inside?"

While he spoke Pakali's face had been turned toward the sunset, and now, when she looked at him, the light of faith and love shone in her dark eyes.

"Even though I knew that you would shut me out of your city, I could not prevent my heart from beating for you," she answered.

With a sudden perception of the sacredness of the responsibility put upon him by this endowment of a woman's supreme devotion, Stuart stood for a moment dumb before Pakali. Then he stretched out his arms to her and she came to him. He folded her close to his heart, and, because there was so much of the white woman in her nature, she wept upon his breast, thus washing out the memory of the dreary days of separation.

There was only a tiny speck of black far off against the horizon when Stuart and Pakali looked for the carriage that they were following, and, after they had caught up with it, they made amends for previous unsociability by keeping close to the vehicle. As the twilight deepened, often they reached

out to clasp hands in the dusk and to whisper words of endearment.

It was late when they reached the halfway house. As they entered the big wagon yard at the side of the inn, Stuart bade Pakali to wait until he should have helped Mr. and Mrs. Beaumont to alight. After he had seen them safe inside the queer house, he lifted Pakali from the saddle and kissed her good-night before he let her go.

They resumed their journey early in the morning when soft breezes swept over the cotton fields and the meadow larks were singing.

"The long ride seems to have done Pakali a world of good," remarked Beaumont, looking at his daughter as she galloped past the carriage.

"She appears very happy to-day," answered Mrs. Beaumont. "She has been lonely at Moma Binna.

CHAPTER VII

NEW HOPES AND OLD PREJUDICES

WAUCHULA was an ambitious town, composed of three thousand white inhabitants, one thousand negroes, and five hundred Indians, who had been brought together because the growing cotton interests opened many lines of business. Owing to the fact that all the land was leased from the Indians, Wauchula had no corporate existence, and its buildings were of the most flimsy and temporary character. The streets were irregular, inasmuch as lots had been selected hit or miss. There were no public improvements and no town officials; indeed, Wauchula had been widely advertised as a city without mayor or police. Although its only scavenger system was maintained by wandering hogs of the variety known as the Texas razor back, Wauchula was not without civic pride. It boasted of ten churches and a building called by courtesy the "Opera House." The fair was held in the Opera House, and thither went Beaumont and Stuart late in the evening, when the festivities were being enjoyed by several hundred persons. On the stage, which was set for a parlour scene, Mrs. Beaumont presided over the serving of supper. The walls of the big room were lined with gaily decorated booths, around which crowded prettily attired girls, and youths, roughly garbed in the costumes much in vogue wherever there is a frontier settlement. A few well-dressed men were conspicuous in the throng. Among these were Cole Mattison and a friend, whom he introduced as Ogden Maury, a youth with a weak, good-natured face and a shock of wavy red hair. Ogden Maury took charge of Stuart.

"You must meet my mother and father," he said, conducting the stranger to a table where cakes were being sold.

Here a stout, dignified, middle-aged white woman, who wore a gown of lavender silk, gave effusive greeting to Stuart.

"I know you do not belong to the Territory," she said, looking at the newcomer. "Do be kind enough to take a chair near me here so that I may have the pleasure of talking with someone who has recently come from civilisation."

Mrs. Maury had rather a handsome face from which the thin, light hair was drawn back into a frizzled pompadour, and a naturally fair skin which had been too liberally dusted with powder. The neck of her gown, from which a triangle had been cut, was filled in with lace, the yellow hue of which proclaimed that it was "real."

"It is no doubt very amusing to visit Wauchula," Mrs. Maury said, fanning herself vigorously. "But it is a terrible thing to be a resident."

"Have you been here for a long time?" Stuart ventured.

"Five dreadful years," Mrs. Maury answered. "We came here for my husband's health, but you know the lines of the poet:

"'Better fifty years of Europe than a cycle of Cathay.' I should say: Better two years of Mississippi than five decades of Indian Territory."

"I have found much to interest me," Stuart remarked. "I consider the Indians of the Chickasaw and Choctaw Nations fine types of a little-understood race."

"That's because you don't know much about them. I hope you won't be as foolish as my son and fall in love with one of the halfbreeds."

Stuart, who had so lately come into a close relation with Pakali, resented the woman's tone. He felt a shock when her words brought home the fact that the girl whom he had chosen for his wife belonged to the class known as mixed bloods.

"I can easily understand how your son might be fascinated

by any one of the beautiful young women I see here to-night," he said.

"Oh, you can, can you?" The fan vibrated with increased velocity. "Would you choose that Virginia Mattison? Ogden Maury is going to marry her. The idea of it is just killing me. But I have to pretend it's all right, and that's why I am helping this bazaar. I don't know why I talk to you so freely, but it seems as if you ought to sympathise with me. Most people after living here a while get so accustomed to the Indians that they seem to think the red man just as good as anyone."

"The Indians form the only real American aristocracy," Stuart declared, giving way to the temptation to retaliate for the comment upon the halfbreeds.

"So you've heard that ridiculous assertion, have you?" Mrs. Maury here excused herself while she sold an angel cake at a fabulous price. "Is your mother living?" she asked, returning to her chair.

Stuart said, "Yes," and Mrs. Maury went on:

"Well, how do you think she'd feel if she had to introduce an Indian squaw as her daughter-in-law? Would she like to look forward to an old age in which she would be surrounded by grandchildren the colour of that flower pot?"

She pointed her fan toward a large earthenware jardiniere in which blossomed an oleander.

Stuart had not thought about his mother, who had been so long in Europe that he seldom considered her in connection with anything which concerned himself. Involuntarily he recoiled from the bald presentation of the intermarriage problem, and he rose to leave Mrs. Maury.

"There! You see you can't reply when anyone discusses a Chickasaw or Choctaw romance in a sensible way." Mrs. Maury smiled and held out her hand. "Well, I'm glad I've uttered a word of warning to you. Don't act upon the idea that this real American aristocracy will some day give your

children a chance to belong to a respected patriotic society called The Daughters of the Tomahawk Wielders, or The Sons of American Scalpers."

Stuart had walked away a short distance when he was called back to be presented to a tall, elderly man with a bald head, a big moustache, and a long goatee.

"You must meet Judge Maury," said the voice that had irritated him for a quarter of an hour.

The two men shook hands, and Stuart instantly liked the Judge, who had a florid face that was kindly in expression.

"Mrs. Maury has been telling me that you came here for your health," he said, by way of making conversation.

The Judge looked at his wife and laughed.

"Well, sir, I suppose that's a polite way of explaining why I left Mississippi," Judge Maury replied. "The fact is, I came away to escape the temptation of drinking too many mint juleps. We can't drink anything here except the patent medicines, no matter how much we need a stimulant."

Mrs. Maury scowled, but the Judge only laughed again. Linking his arm in Stuart's, he promised to take the stranger to the place where he would see the prettiest girl in the Southwest.

The two men threaded their way among the groups of laughing young persons and came to a booth that was the center of attraction. Here Pakali, who wore a picturesque Indian costume, sold moccasins and bead work, which had been obtained from the wild tribes of Oklahoma. Stuart watched her for a few moments while she was unconscious of his presence. She was a Chickasaw for the hour. The costume brought out all the distinguishing characteristics of her Indian ancestry. Her black hair fell in two heavy braids below the waist, and the gay jacket, open at the neck, showed her smooth, dark skin. On her delicately rounded arms, bare to the elbow, heavy bracelets of rudely hammered silver were worn. A strangely wrought girdle of semi-

precious stones united her skirt with a crimson under-blouse, heavily embroidered. Gorgeous moccasins encased her small feet.

Pakali smiled upon all who came to buy her wares. It was her nature to laugh seldom, but to-night she was in a merry mood and her red lips often parted, revealing the dazzling teeth that were a portion of her heritage from a primitive race. Now and then her eyes, dark and luminous, searched the throng as if she missed some face.

Judge Maury was called away, and Stuart had a chance to ponder a moment upon the fact that the Indian girl had promised to be his wife. Until that night she had been to him a woman apart from all others, but, although she had never failed to remind him she was a Chickasaw, he had not stopped to measure the full purport of her lineage. In the years to come would she belong altogether to his race? Or might she develop atavistic tendencies? She was young now, and all that was Indian in her added to her charm, for she had borrowed only the beauty and the romance of the red race. Mrs. Maury's words left a little sting. Stuart hated himself for remembering them while he looked at Pakali.

The girl turned her head as if she were listening. It seemed as if she might be aware of Stuart's disloyal thoughts. He noticed a shade of anxiety on her face, and he stepped forward so that she could see him. Forgetting the crowd she cast upon him such a look of happy recognition that it was strange all who beheld her did not guess love was shining in her eyes. The crowd saw that a stranger had come to the booth and Stuart was allowed to go to the railing where he could speak to Pakali.

" It is five years since we last met, Miss Beaumont," he said in distinct tones, bowing as formally as if he had but just arrived in the Territory.

" Five years! " Pakali exclaimed.

" Yes, five years," he said, and then, lowering his tone so

that only Pakali could hear: "It was six o'clock when you left me, and every hour away from you seems a year."

"Hush!" she cautioned. "Such speeches are not proper at a church fair."

"Come. We are all to have supper together. Your father and mother and some of your friends are waiting now, up there on the stage."

"I cannot go until I have sold the very last pappoose bag, and the uttermost pincushion," she answered with decision.

"Then you shall go in ten minutes, for I will buy your whole stock."

"That would not be exactly businesslike," objected Pakali. "I have promised to close the booth with an auction."

"Let's have the auction now."

Without more ado Stuart stepped upon a chair and began to commend a tobacco pouch to possible purchasers. As he stood high above the men and women who pushed forward he was easily recognised as a man who belonged to a distant State. With the self-possession of the habitant of cities he addressed the throng. His training as a lawyer gave him a ready wit in public speaking and he soon disposed of everything excepting a few undesirable specimens of needlework, which he bought.

Mr. and Mrs. Beaumont, with Judge and Mrs. Maury, were still waiting at the supper table when Stuart and Pakali had successfully finished their labour of selling beadwork. After they were seated three places were still reserved, and these soon were occupied by Cole Mattison, his sister Virginia, and Ogden Maury.

"I am glad this thing is just about ended," declared Beaumont, looking down upon the thinning crowd. "The next time we want money for a church we'll just hire a regular circus to come from Texas, or we'll do something else that's easy."

Mrs. Beaumont shook her head reprovingly, but admitted that she was very tired. Her delicate face was flushed, and in her soft foulard gown she had regained much of her youthful prettiness. Glancing from the face of his wife to the face of his daughter, Beaumont said jestingly:

"Mother, do you own this Indian girl in the buckskin togs?"

Stuart looked for some resemblance between the young woman and the elder one, and he saw only that there was a similarity in the curve of the lips, and in the outline of the chin.

"My Chickasaw family makes it difficult for me to retain a Christian humility of spirit," Mrs. Beaumont answered, looking affectionately at her husband and her only child.

"Ever since I first became acquainted with Miss Lenore I have had an exalted opinion of Indians," Judge Maury asserted gallantly.

Mrs. Maury gave the impression that she was about to make a remark, but a second thought evidently caused her to remain silent. The appearance of Ogden Maury and Virginia Mattison diverted attention. Mrs. Maury gave the girl a cold greeting, but Virginia had a pride quite equal to that of her future mother-in-law, and her manner showed indifference to the opinion of the older woman.

"Everything has gone beautifully this evening. I am so happy over it," exclaimed Virginia. "I am sure Mr. Stuart will say he never saw a better church fair in Chicago."

Stuart truthfully averred that he had never before attended any festivity so enjoyable as the Wauchula bazaar. Church fairs were not included in the list of his social experiences at home, but he did not mention this fact.

"When one considers that we are on the frontier this is a most surprising success," admitted Mrs. Maury, with an air of condescension.

"There isn't any frontier nowadays," Virginia replied,

with a little resentment in her tone. "But the Territory labours under many unpleasant conditions, because we Indians are the wards of Uncle Sam."

Mrs. Beaumont hastened to change the subject by inquiring whether the party preferred salted or unsalted butter on the chicken sandwiches.

The cold meats and salads were served by pretty girls who chatted with Pakali and Virginia. Cole Mattison helped the volunteer waitresses carry in the heavy cups of coffee. Supper proceeded without any conversational jar until Mrs. Maury began to arrange a sight-seeing party for a barbecue which was to take place a month later.

"You must not make your plans so far ahead," cautioned Ogden Maury. "Virginia and I have just set our wedding day, and I shall expect you to keep very busy helping us furnish our house."

The young man's mother was speechless for a moment.

"Lenore must prepare to devote much of her time to me," Virginia added, quickly. "For I am sure I cannot do anything without her advice."

Pakali responded rather half-heartedly.

"Who knows but Miss Lenore may have a wedding of her own to think about," Judge Maury suggested at random.

It was plain that the Judge's careless words had touched the truth, for Pakali's face flamed with a vivid crimson.

"If I have any influence with her there will soon be a wedding at Moma Binna," said Stuart. "A few hours ago Mr. and Mrs. Beaumont gave their consent to my engagement to their daughter."

He looked Mrs. Maury square in the face.

Rising from his chair Judge Maury covered all embarrassment by saying:

"Here's a wish for long life and happiness. If I were not in the Territory I should drink your health in a mint julep."

CHAPTER VIII

HATTAKOWA SAYS FAREWELL

MOMA BINNA was being made ready for Pakali's wedding day. A month had passed since the Wauchula fair, and Beaumont reluctantly had given his consent when Stuart urged that the marriage should take place at the earliest possible date. The old Indian had not thought that his only daughter might leave the Nation, but, after Pakali pleaded that she loved the stranger as she could never love anybody else in all the world, he had declared that she should choose what promised happiness to her.

"I should be the last person to insist that you should marry a Chickasaw or Choctaw," he said, "for you have only followed your father's example in loving one of the white race."

Mrs. Beaumont had acknowledged that deep in her heart she coveted for her daughter all the advantages the world could offer. The idea of the necessary separation from her only child gave her such deep pain that, following her long custom of severe self-discipline, she had prayed much, and had tried to put out of her mind all thoughts of the lonely days that were coming to her.

Stuart had taken pains to furnish Beaumont with the most minute information concerning himself. Because the Indian appeared to share Pakali's absolute trust in him, it became a matter of pride that he should supply credentials which would show that his was an honourable name. When he had frankly admitted that he had little wealth but large ambitions, Beaumont had hastily interrupted him with the words: "Pakali will not need wealth from you. In her

own right she will have all that she and her children will want."

This remark had brought a flush of shame to the white man's face and he made the quick answer:

"Surely you know that until this moment I have never thought of Pakali's inheritance."

Beaumont had laughed. "Certainly I know it," he said. "For if you were mercenary you would have planned to stay here in the Territory, and you would have desired to marry my daughter according to the Chickasaw laws, which would give you full Indian rights to land and tribal property. If I consulted my own wishes I should endeavour to persuade you to cast your lot with us, but I respect you because you intend to make your own way by means of your profession."

Stuart had gone to Texas to take charge of a case tried in the courts of Galveston. This business enabled him to pass the weeks before the wedding not too far from Pakali. In a jesting manner he had said that he could not go back to Chicago without her, for he had a premonition that if he did, in some way, she might be lost to him.

Pakali paid little attention to her mother's elaborate preparations for the wedding. She had gone about in a happy dream from which she had awakened only now and then when her father or mother reminded her that she was about to leave them. She had passed much of her time on horseback, and, every day, sitting upon the big rock down by the creek, had written long letters to Arnold Stuart.

Pakali could now count the hours that must elapse before the man she loved would come for her. Again she stood upon the veranda of Moma Binna and looked down upon the village of Tishomingo. The early evening had brought quiet to the household, and she had been busy with the last arrangements for the festivities which were to attend the wedding. In the negro quarters she heard the servants sing-

ing after their hard day's work. She had kissed the Little Mother, who was so tired as to be obliged to lie upon the big lounge in the living room, and she had watched her father walk down the hill to meet some of the Indians at the old Poyner tavern. Now that she was alone in the twilight, she felt a pang of homesickness as she wondered how it would seem when she was no longer one of the Chickasaw Nation. Looking into the future she imagined how she would miss her parents and her friends, and how she might listen in the noise of the great city for the soothing music of Pennington Creek. Hattakowa had said that she had become in spirit a white woman, but she knew the Indian within her always would long for the cool forests and the rushing waters.

Hattakowa—where was he? For the first time in all the weeks of her joyous dreaming she thought intently of her kinsman. His mother had come to bring her a gift and to wish her happy years, but he had not even sent her a message. As if in answer to her thought Hattakowa rode up the hill. He was leading a black saddle horse with well arched neck and slender legs. Before he noticed Pakali he ordered one of the servants to take his own mount and the other horse to the stable. Then he walked slowly toward the house. The girl ran down the steps to meet him.

" It seemed as if you had forgotten me, Hattakowa," she said, reproachfully, but when she looked into his face its expression rebuked her for a remark that had in it something of the coquetry common to all women.

" It was my intention never to see you again, Pakali," he answered, retaining the hand she held out to him. " To-day, when I counted that the sun would set but twice before you were lost to me forever, I ceased to be a strong man. I came to tell you that I would have my love for you become as a charm that will bring you help in time of need."

" I knew you would never fail me if I needed your help," Pakali answered, " but wish that your love may be a charm

that will save me from all trouble, instead of a help after trouble comes."

"I would have the Great Spirit bestow upon my Star Woman only the precious gifts."

Hattakowa turned away from her to stand for a moment with his arms crossed over his broad chest.

"From the hour I saw the stranger I knew his coming to Moma Binna meant much to all beneath its roof," he said, slowly. "But even though through all the days since then I have tried to bend to fate, I stand before you now rebellious because I am not the man who is to share your life. Through many centuries the Indian has found the lesson of submission set for him by the white race one that he cannot learn."

"Hush, Hattakowa. Dear Hattakowa, I cannot bear to think that my happiness will cause you grief," cried Pakali.

"I am a blundering fellow, yet you know I would not cast even the slightest shadow upon you," said Hattakowa. "Remember, the Indian must either keep his mouth closed, or speak with words that carry the truth but roughly garbed."

His eyes rested upon her with a look of intense longing. The girl shrank away from him.

"You need not be afraid that I shall carry you off," Hattakowa said. "Even though I have brought two horses I have planned no reckless deed by which I may possess you, who are to me 'The Woman to be Desired above all Others.' I have brought you my Ossilusa for a wedding gift. Even though you may not take the Black Eagle away with you it will be a pleasure for me to know that he is yours."

"How good of you!" exclaimed Pakali. "You remembered that I admired Ossilusa more than any other horse that you own. But did you not tell me that he was to win races for you?"

"Surely I would give you only what is best of all," answered Hattakowa.

The brief twilight had faded from the sky. In the dusk Pakali held out her hand to Hattakowa and he drew her near to him where he could see her face, which wore a new beauty—the beauty that love gives to a woman who accepts it as a holy revelation.

" This must be good-bye, Pakali," said Hattakowa. " You will not mind if I tell you that through all the years I shall carry the memory of the kiss you gave me even though I may never again touch your lips."

Trembling, Pakali listened to him, and while he looked at her the longing in his heart warned him that he dared not wait to tell the woman he loved that, liked winged arrows, his best hopes would follow her.

CHAPTER IX

A GALA DAY AT TISHOMINGO

PAKALI'S wedding day came with a glory of golden sunshine. The news that the daughter of George Beaumont was to be married to a white man, who would take her away from the Territory, had spread to every house in the Chickasaw Nation. Fullbloods, who looked upon Mr. and Mrs. Beaumont as protectors against the encroachment of settlers from the States, expressed their sorrow because Pakali had chosen a husband from among their hereditary oppressors, but their regret concerning the alliance of the most beautiful daughter of the Chickasaws with a white man did not prevent them from sending to Moma Binna tokens of their good will.

Except kinsmen of the Beaumont family, Governor Sands and John Oaktree were the only Chickasaws bidden to the marriage ceremony, but George Beaumont had arranged a feast in front of the brick capitol on the hill to which all who might come were welcome. It had been Stuart's wish that there should be few guests and little ostentation at the wedding. Virginia Mattison and her brother Cole, Judge and Mrs. Maury, and Ogden Maury, were the only guests from Wauchula in addition to those whose claims of kinship entitled them to invitations. Inasmuch as the Indian counts his relatives as far away as the family blood can be traced, a large party assembled at Moma Binna.

The big house had been decorated with trailing vines and graceful branches of the oak and locust trees. It had been Pakali's whimsical fancy to have the large living room arranged so that it would be suggestive of Indian traditions. "My great-grandmother was married in the forest," she said

to her father, " and I want you to know that, although I am to be the wife of a white man, still, on the happiest day of my life, I shall keep uppermost in my mind the thought that I am a Chickasaw, and that I must be always worthy to be counted as one of the Nation." Veranda and living room had been transformed into woodland nooks, for young saplings, ground pine, and mosses had been used with good effect.

As Arnold Stuart rode into Tishomingo on the early morning of his wedding day, he passed many queer looking vehicles carrying Indians who were attired in holiday dress. All the Chickasaws and Choctaws wore the garments of civilisation, but these were strangely fashioned, and many incongruous effects were produced by combinations of cheap millinery and custom-made finery.

Stuart had been thinking of Pakali with the pride of near possession. In the days of their separation he had had ample time to attempt analysis of his love for the Indian girl. He had never been a cool-headed, calculating man, so far as women were concerned, but he could not explain his precipitate wooing except on the ground that Pakali satisfied his heart's desire. He knew that he had been susceptible to the fascination of the strange life of the Territory, and that it had amused him to adapt himself to conditions entirely different from those in which he had been reared. Because always he had been free to indulge whatever whim or desire might present itself to him, he had put out of his mind every possible objection likely to arise from his choice of a Chickasaw wife. Fate, or chance, had smoothed the way to his speedy marriage. Even the case that took him to Texas had prevented him from returning to Chicago, whence he would have seen Indian Territory from the vantage ground of a far perspective.

It was his wedding day, and, after his usual fashion, he entertained only the pleasant thoughts. Whenever a doubt embodying his mother's opinion, or his future ambitions,

passed across his mind, he spurred his horse, and, looking up into the cloudless sky, repeated: "Pakali belongs to me."

Stuart dismounted at a spring where John Oaktree and several other fullbloods had halted.

"What is taking the crowd to Tishomingo?" he asked, by way of greeting. But John Oaktree did not understand English. Stuart repeated the question, and a bright-faced girl answered:

"To-day Miss Beaumont will be married to a stranger."

"And is everyone going to the wedding?" inquired Stuart, with a pang of apprehension. The realisation that he was about to identify himself with the Indians swept over him.

"The bride's father will give a feast for the Chickasaws. Only kinfolk will go to the wedding," explained the girl.

Leaning against a tree the man who was to be the bridegroom waited until John Oaktree should drive away. For a moment the dusty road, the moving wagons, and the long stretch of green prairie, blurred before him. With an impatient gesture he removed his eyeglasses and tipped back his hat, which had suddenly become heavy upon his head.

While he stood there a white farmer, his Indian wife, and three halfbreed children passed in an old wooden cart, which was drawn by a yoke of oxen, driven with bits. The farmer was a sorry specimen of the shiftless Tennessee mountaineer, and, as he cracked his whip over the heads of the oxen, and then slapped his reins upon their backs, he presented an absurd picture, which brought a smile to Stuart's lips.

"I see you are laughing at old Bill Masson," said a voice. "He's jest one of those triflin' squaw men." It was John Oaktree's son who spoke. The young Indian had come back for a hitching strap, which had been dropped from his father's wagon.

"A squaw man?" repeated Stuart.

"Yes, he's one of those galvanised Indians," was the

answer, as the lad picked up the missing strap. "He belongs to the class of intermarried citizens the Indians despise."

"Oh, I understand," said Stuart. "You mean that he has been adopted into the Nation because he is the husband of a Chickasaw woman."

"Yes. There are so many squaw men that our legislature is going to raise the marriage license. My father says it ought to be at least a thousand dollars, and then every good-for-nothing white could not afford to acquire the legal right to steal our lands."

The Indian, whose speech showed that John Oaktree appreciated the advantage of educating his children, nodded a farewell, and ran after the wagon.

"I wonder if they will call me a 'squaw man' or a 'galvanised Indian,'" Stuart exclaimed with a shudder. It had not occurred to him that it made any difference what the Chickasaws might think of his marriage to the daughter of the wealthiest man in the Nation. According to the tribal laws, he could not become a citizen unless he had been a resident of the Territory for two years before his marriage to a Chickasaw, and then the ceremony had to be performed according to certain legal requirements. Without regard to tribal laws he and Pakali were to be married by the minister who had preached in the little church on that Sunday that seemed so long ago. It was a comfort to think that no one could accuse him of seeking to steal an inheritance from the Nation. Still, the incident jarred upon his nerves, and he continued his journey without the buoyancy of spirit that had marked the beginning of his ride.

It was late when Stuart reached Tishomingo. It had been his hope to have an hour or two with Pakali in their nook down by Pennington Creek, but he had barely time to dress before the noon hour appointed for the ceremony. When he arrived at Moma Binna he was not permitted to see Pakali because of a superstition that it would be bad luck, and he

had to be content to send his gift to her by one of the servants. This gift, an heirloom from a Scottish ancestor, was a cairngorn brooch, set with diamonds. He believed it was something Pakali would appreciate, and he scribbled a little note asking her to wear it on her bridal gown.

The moments seemed hours while he waited for Pakali in a little alcove. He was but vaguely conscious of the assembled guests who stood at a little distance from him. Once or twice, when his glance wandered, he caught a blurred picture of dark-skinned men and women in costumes oddly varying from the conventional models dictated by fashion to the factory-made garment that the Indian makes his own after he has added the touch of a bright handkerchief.

Governor Sands's rugged face was conspicuous, for he stood in the front line of guests, close to Mrs. Beaumont, who looked pale and fragile. Stuart was conscious that Mrs. Maury was even more gorgeously arrayed than usual. She leaned upon the Judge's arm, and her face wore a solemn expression which suggested that she was looking forward to her son's alliance with a Chickasaw girl.

At last Pakali came, leaning upon her father's arm. As Stuart looked upon her, every emotion except love and pride and hope left him. She wore a filmy, white gown, the trailing folds of which brought out the slender lines of her lithe body. Her glossy, black hair was parted in the fashion that became her so well, and its heavy coils were caught at the back with an amber " tucking comb " that had belonged to Hattakowa's mother. The cairngorn brooch fastened the lace fichu over her bosom.

Pakali's eyes shone with an unfaltering faith as they rested upon the handsome face of the man who had chosen her as the one woman to whom he would pledge fealty until death.

The minister read the service in a droning voice. Absent-mindedly Stuart listened until he heard the words that

pronounced him and Pakali man and wife. His fingers closed over the slender little hand upon which he had placed the wedding ring as a symbol of his new obligation to care for her until death should part them.

In a moment they were surrounded by the friends who hastened to wish them happiness. After Mrs. Beaumont had kissed Pakali and smiled upon Stuart, even while she brushed away her tears, Beaumont embraced his daughter in a fashion which contradicted the idea that the Indian is not demonstrative.

"The white man has made another pledge to the Indian," said Governor Sands, placing one strong hand upon Stuart's shoulder. "That he will be worthy of the trust this Chickasaw girl puts in him is my hope. Do not let Pakali forget her people when she has lived for a time as one of the white man's *iksa.*"

The Governor passed on, and Mrs. Maury offered polite greetings. Her manner was constrained. It was easy to guess that she did not approve of the marriage, but the Judge made up for her lack of cordiality. He proclaimed his right to kiss the bride, a right Stuart contested with the declaration that the bride's first kiss belonged to her husband; and so the Judge had to be satisfied with a chance to whisper that Mrs. Stuart must remember it would be his highest privilege to render her loving service whenever the opportunity presented itself.

Ogden Maury and Virginia Mattison laughed a great deal when they came to offer congratulations. With many light jests because the stranger had monopolised interest by hastening his wedding day so that the Chickasaw Nation seemed to forget about the Maury-Mattison engagement, they made way for a tall, shrivelled Indian woman, whose face bore deep lines of experience and suffering. Her hair was slightly touched with grey, and her blazing black eyes were set in deep sockets. The woman wore a rich black

silk gown, fashionably made, but around her neck was a chain of barbaric workmanship, and large earrings of hammered gold hung in her withered ears.

"Dear Aunt Totopehah, I am so glad you are here!" exclaimed Pakali, throwing her arms around the woman's neck and kissing her with almost as much emotion as she had shown when she embraced her mother. Turning to Stuart, she said:

"This is Mrs. Dixon, Hattakowa's mother. You must love my Aunt Totopehah."

"Pakali has been a daughter to me," said Mrs. Dixon. Her voice trembled, and she added: "If you are good to her you will have the blessing of an old woman."

Mrs. Dixon gazed at Pakali for a moment. She had turned away, but the amber comb caught her notice.

"You are indeed my Chickasaw daughter," she said, smiling at Pakali. "I thought you would wear a veil, and a wreath of orange blossoms, but you think my girlhood trinket is ornament enough for a bride."

"I was afraid that you would not notice that I have tried to be true to my Indian traditions just as far as possible," Pakali answered.

Something in the elder woman's face made Pakali leave Stuart's side to speak for a moment with her aunt.

"Tell Hattakowa that I go away loving him as my brother," she said to Mrs. Dixon.

Hattakowa's mother made no reply. Putting her thin hand upon Pakali's shoulder she looked past the beautiful face which was so near to hers, and appeared to be gazing into the future.

"Where is Hattakowa?" Pakali asked, after a moment.

"He has gone north to Wyoming on a long hunting trip," Mrs. Dixon answered.

Beaumont slipped his arm through Mrs. Dixon's, and, bidding Pakali to lead her husband to the dining-room, he

placed his kinswoman at the table where the wedding breakfast was served.

With the best grace possible Stuart endured the long hours of the afternoon. According to the Territory custom the wedding breakfast was an elaborate feast, at which there was much formality. Sitting at the head of the long, flower-decked table beside Pakali, the bridegroom felt himself more of a spectator than a participant in the festivities.

The sunset time was near before Pakali, attired for her going away, said good-bye on the veranda of Moma Binna. The deep feeling, pent up during the festivities of the day, broke forth in various demonstrations, which revealed to Stuart something of the meaning of Pakali's separation from her people. Mrs. Beaumont, who had been exceedingly brave, wept hysterically, and Beaumont, as he helped Pakali to soothe her, explained that the Little Mother was exhausted from fatigue. After a fashion, common even outside the Territory, the girls in the wedding party shed tears.

At last Lem, who had had the family carriage ready for an hour, drove up before the house. The servants were lined along the driveway. To each one Pakali said farewell with many a handshake. Last of all she spoke to Mammy 'Liza, who lamented loudly because her " chile " was leaving her.

Before she would consent to enter the carriage Pakali stood for a moment upon the spot whence she could look down upon Tishomingo.

" I have been very happy here," she said, running back to the veranda of Moma Binna to give her mother a last kiss. Stuart followed her, watching while she stood murmuring soft words of endearment to her parents. At last he had to lead her to the carriage because a strange reluctance to leave home suddenly possessed her.

" You must not look back; you must look forward," said

Stuart, drawing Pakali close to him as the carriage descended the hill whence it passed into the main street of Tishomingo. Through a mist of tears Pakali glanced up Pennington Creek as they crossed the rustic bridge. The waters of the turbulent stream made familiar music to her ears, and she thought of the many days she had passed in her rocky nook beside the water's edge.

"I marked to-day with a stick broken from my favourite rose bush." Pakali's voice sounded as if it were chanting the rhythm of the water. "There were two buds and many leaves on the little twig, and the buds grew very close together."

For an answer Stuart pressed her hand. Often he found himself dumb when he would respond to Pakali's poetic moods. Now that she had taken his name, and was going forth to share his life, he wondered whether she would ever feel that he was not worthy of the love she gave him. Since their betrothal Pakali had been elusive and undemonstrative. His absence in Texas had prevented him from knowing the Chickasaw girl as she would reveal herself to the man who was to be her husband, for they had seen each other little after the trip to Wauchula.

As the carriage sped along the main street of Tishomingo, groups of Indians shouted greetings to Pakali, who smiled and waved her hand at them. At the capitol grounds Lem stopped the horses. It was here that Beaumont had had the long tables spread for the big feast. A few gourmands still lingered over the meats and delicacies, but most of the wedding guests were lounging beneath the trees. The women hastily rose in order to catch a glimpse of the bride whose high-bred face and modish gown gave little hint that she belonged to the Nation. Pakali waved her handkerchief, while Stuart, with uncovered head, stood beside her. She tossed some of the white flowers, that Virginia Mattison had put into the carriage, to a group of girls, who scrambled

for them and then wished her happiness that would last a thousand months.

Lem cracked his whip. Again Stuart drew Pakali close to him, and the carriage moved on. They were silent until Tishomingo was far behind them.

" The Indian girl has left her people to follow the white man," Pakali said softly. Raising her eyes to the sky that was dyed in the hues of sunset, she added in a half questioning tone: " We are going toward the golden city, and you could not close the gates upon me."

" If I closed the gates I should bar out happiness forever," answered Stuart, and very reverently he kissed Pakali, whispering that she was his wife whom he had just promised to cherish until death should part them.

The sky took on a deeper hue, and a flaming cloud, that hung over the horizon, stretched until it had set a bar across the face of the sinking sun.

CHAPTER X

JOY WAITS BUT AN HOUR

" ALL my life I have been taught that no one can be perfectly happy in this world, but now I know that even the Little Mother, who preaches that doctrine, is wrong."

Pakali spoke as she stood upon the rustic steps of the log ranch house in which she and Arnold Stuart had been passing the fortnight that had elapsed since their marriage. It had been her wish that she might become accustomed to the thought of belonging to the white man before she had to adjust herself to the more far-reaching idea that she belonged to the white man's people.

" So you do not repent because you have chosen to follow me far away from the Chickasaw Nation? " said Stuart, going to her from the comfortable armchair in which he had been lounging.

She put her arms around his neck and then, with a half shy gesture, stroked his fair hair.

" Our love is such a wonderful revelation that one cannot reason about it," she answered. " Whatever happens I shall be always grateful to the Ruler of all things because I have been given these days alone with you." Resting her head upon his shoulder Pakali pondered for a moment. " The day we were married I thought I loved you, for you were the only man who reached my ideal of a husband, but now you have made yourself all of life to me. It was as Hattakowa said, I thought and felt as a white woman thinks and feels, and none of the young men of my people could touch my heart. When you came, something in you satisfied me, but I tried to remember that you did not think of me except as a new type of a woman."

" Foolish Pakali! " exclaimed Stuart.

" No, I was not foolish, and even now I cannot quite understand why you were so determined about hastening our marriage."

" I married you because it has always been my custom to obey my ruling impulse. After I was separated from you for a day I knew that I must win you before I could concentrate my mind upon any other ambition in the world."

Through his glasses Stuart looked down upon Pakali with admiring eyes, but she returned his glance with a look of apprehension.

" Your confession frightens me," she said. " I do not want to believe that you are always impetuous and easily influenced by caprice."

" How serious my little wife has become," replied Stuart, laughing in his careless, boyish way. " You shall guide my caprices so that their indulgence may be safe."

" Sometimes I have wondered whether you do not take life as a playtime." Pakali put one hand upon Stuart's ruddy cheek and studied the outlines of his handsome face. " The Indians think that a cleft chin signifies a self-indulgent spirit."

" A cleft chin signifies that I have a wonderful capacity for love."

" In the years that are to come I may measure the height and depth of your love," said Pakali, stepping away from her husband, " but now I know you have the power to kindle in my heart a love that dominates my whole nature."

Into her eyes had come the solemn look that Stuart had noticed when he had studied the child's portrait on the morning after his arrival at Moma Binna.

" New emotions stir in me," she went on; " like my great-grandmother of the Chickasaws I am ready to serve you humbly one moment, and the next I know the Indian spirit of revenge when, in a vagrant dream, I imagine how it might

have been if you had gone away to your golden city without me."

"Why, dear heart, how grave you have become!" exclaimed Stuart. "A moment ago you were telling me that you were perfectly happy, and now your words contradict that statement."

He put his arms around her and held her close to him. He kissed her lips and felt her quickened breath upon his cheek. Trembling, she gave herself up to the joy of the moment. The passion of the savage woman who has not learned to disguise her natural feelings shone in her dark eyes. Looking into her face Stuart read something that caused him to put her from him as if he dared not fathom the depths of her emotion.

"Come, let us go out to ride," he said. "We have been borrowing troubles. We have been entirely too sober-minded. You know I cannot bear to contemplate any but the pleasantest possibilities." He laughed happily, and she let him conduct her to the stile beyond which their horses were tethered.

"Forgive my inconsistent mood, Arnold." Pakali stopped on the top of the stile to gather her habit about her. Her voice lingered upon the name that was new to her tongue. She smiled back at him and said, slowly:

"Love is teaching me that a woman's emotions are much more complex than a man's."

"Than a girl's, you mean," corrected Stuart; "for you cannot know all I feel when I realise that you belong to me——"

"Forever and ever," finished Pakali. "We Indians love but once, and that love lasts beyond the hour of death."

It had been the plan of Stuart and Pakali to drive the next day to Ardmore, a flourishing town which was the nearest railway point, and there to meet a northbound train that would take them to Chicago.

Stuart had not announced his marriage to his mother, who was in Paris, nor to his friends in Chicago. He and Pakali had agreed that it would be wiser not to create a sensation by sending North the news that Arnold Stuart had married an Indian girl.

"When they see you, Pakali, they will think you are of Spanish descent," Stuart had said. "Indeed, my mother might accept you as one of her much-loved Parisiennes. We shall have much enjoyment out of the surprise you will give my ignorant friends who imagine that the Chickasaws are still savages."

Mr. and Mrs. Beaumont had not liked the idea that Stuart should delay publishing in Chicago the notice of his marriage, but they had consented to permit a postponement of the announcement because it was their pleasure to humour Pakali, who had shrunk from the idea that Stuart's friends might be prejudiced against her.

Inasmuch as Stuart had desired to start for Chicago immediately after the ceremony, and he had delayed the trip in obedience to Pakali's wish, his marriage would have been made known within a few days had he consulted only his own impulses. He had been away from his business so long that he felt an impatience to return. While he was bent upon winning Pakali for his own, he had put his professional cares out of his mind, but as soon as he was sure that the girl he loved was safely bound to him he began to think of the busy world in which he had a place. The fortnight on the ranch had brought to him all the joy that belongs to the realisation of a man's dream of love. The sunshiny days had drifted by so quietly that with surprise he noted the ending of the two weeks, but, because civilised man has a limited capacity for sentiment, Stuart had found time to remember some of the prosaic interests of his life. Even while he and Pakali had talked together out in the moonlight, where the trees cast long shadows upon the waving grasses, he had

spoken of the material ambitions concerning the acquirement of political place and professional success.

As Stuart rode with Pakali on this last morning of their sojourn in the new Eden, he talked of the pleasures of a large city. Although Pakali shook her head when he promised that she should be made happy by a round of operas and balls and dinners that would cause her to forget the simple recreations of the Territory, the young wife listened with happy interest because she meant to fulfil all the requirements of her changed position in life.

It was noon when Stuart and Pakali returned to the log house, where the one negro servant had been packing Stuart's guns and fishing tackle. At the stile Lem waited with a note from Moma Binna.

"Is it bad news?" questioned Pakali, and Lem answered that the missus was sick at Moma Binna.

Stuart read the note, which summoned Pakali to Mrs. Beaumont's bedside. The Little Mother had had a stroke of paralysis, Beaumont wrote, breaking the news as gently as possible. The carriage was waiting, and, within an hour, Stuart and Pakali were on their way back to Tishomingo. It was late in the afternoon before Moma Binna was reached.

"It seems as if I had been away two years instead of two weeks," Pakali exclaimed, when she saw the roof of Moma Binna.

"I thought the fortnight seemed more like two days," answered Stuart, with a tone of reproach in his voice.

"You don't understand me." Pakali stopped to gaze at her girlhood's home, slowly noting every familiar detail of the house and grounds. "Each day since we were married has gone by too quickly, but I have lived much in loving you. I went away a careless girl. I have come back feeling that life means more than just waiting for each day's happenings."

Stuart put his arm around her. "It will shock you to find your mother ill," he told her, "but I am sure you will be brave."

Beaumont came to meet them. His brown face was haggard, he walked slowly and appeared greatly aged.

"Is the Little Mother very ill?" asked Pakali, running into his arms and kissing him again and again.

"She is quite helpless," Beaumont answered, in a husky voice. "She was tired after the wedding, and she missed our Chickasaw Flower. To-day, when she was reading the Bible at morning prayer, she had what we thought was a fainting fit. Mammy 'Liza was the first to notice that something was the matter. Luckily, however, Dr. Briggs, of Wauchula, happened to be in Tishomingo, and he has done all he can."

They had walked up the path to the house and Pakali went in to her mother, who lay in a white-curtained bed. Mrs. Beaumont recognised her daughter, and, although the power of speech was denied her, there was a loving welcome in her eyes. Mammy 'Liza had made Pakali take off her hat before she entered the sick woman's room, and Mrs. Beaumont appeared to forget that there had been a wedding at Moma Binna. With Pakali's hand in hers she fell asleep.

Through the next week Stuart waited patiently in the hope that Mrs. Beaumont's condition would improve. While Pakali and the servants nursed the sick woman he passed many hours alone. He had a rare talent for sympathy, and he comforted Pakali with a tenderness that made her tell him again and again that she was the most blessed of women.

"It is wonderful how much I belong to you," Pakali said one evening, when she had lightly stolen up behind her husband's chair to surprise him by putting her arms around his neck. "Since I came home it is as if I were an outsider. Moma Binna can never be quite the same to me. I have been away many months at school, but always I returned as my

father's daughter, and now my relation to you makes such a difference!"

"Surely you have not forgotten that you are an Indian!" Stuart said, with a smile, as he took one of her hands from beneath his chin to kiss it tenderly. Holding it before him he looked at the palm and pretended to read her fortune.

"The lines say that your heart rules your head," he jested. "Your life is to be long and useful, but your destiny is obscured by angles that only an adept could understand."

"My heart did guide me when I chose a husband," Pakali admitted; "but whatever my destiny, I shall not complain since I have found love."

Stuart still held her hand. "What long, tapering fingers you have," he said, admiring the almond-shaped nails. "And your hands are very small."

"Small hands and feet are the heritage of the race that has never worked," laughed Pakali. "But I mean to show you that at least one Indian can be very industrious. I know how busy your Chicago women are, and I shall try to be so much like them that you will soon forget you have married a Chickasaw."

"But I don't wish you to be like the Chicago women," objected her husband. "I should hate to have you going to clubs and joining reform organisations. I warn you that I don't want you to establish a Sequoia League for the amelioration of the condition of the Indian. I could not bear to have your picture in the Sunday newspapers."

"If I ever start any Indian reform it will be a society for the prevention of the sale of beaded plush capes and picture hats to the women of the Nation. There is a shocking waste of money among the fullbloods."

She laughed again and ran away, leaving Stuart to wish, for the hundredth time within the hour, that he might soon take her where he could have her all to himself. But this desire was not to be granted. Nearly a month passed. The

heat of an Indian Territory mid-summer became terribly oppressive, and the paralytic patient lost strength appreciably.

Stuart received many letters from his law partners. Each letter became more insistent that his prolonged absence should be explained, and all urged his return to his work. At last there came a letter which could not be put aside. It bore a foreign postmark, and it had been forwarded from Chicago. The superscription was in his mother's familiar handwriting. On three sheets of note paper, which bore an elaborate monogram, Mrs. Stuart begged that her son would start for Paris without delay, as she was about to submit to a serious surgical operation. There were many paragraphs of complaint because of her dear Arnold's spasmodic correspondence. Now that her life hung in the balance, no time must be lost if her only son would make amends for recent neglectfulness. Stuart had not contemplated the possibility that his mother would call him across the ocean to her. He had never borrowed trouble, but when trouble came he was often completely overwhelmed by it. He put his mother's letter into his pocket and waited all day before he could summon courage to tell Pakali about it. He thought seriously of declining to make the trip. He and his mother never had been in close sympathy. He knew he could be of no material help to her, and his peculiar nature made him desirous of avoiding the anxiety necessarily entailed by the ordeal to which his mother would have to submit.

Walking in the twilight, with Pakali's hand in his, Stuart told his young wife about the letter. Omitting all comment, he asked her what answer he should send. Pakali stopped, and, pressing her hands to her heart, looked at Stuart with a terrible fear in her eyes.

"There is but one answer," she said in a frightened voice. "You must go to your mother." She was silent for a moment. "And I must stay here with mine," she said, as if pronouncing sentence upon herself.

"I could not go without you, Pakali," declared Stuart. "I have hardly known how to live during those days when you were shut away from me in your mother's room. And do you think I could cross the ocean without you? I shall be so proud to take you to my mother, and I could not let her die without seeing you."

"The Little Mother is just waiting on the borderland between this world and the next," Pakali answered with a sob, "and I could not leave her. I could not leave her."

Stuart put his strong arms around her. "There, do not shed one tear because you think you are to be left alone, my love, my wife! Don't you know that you are more to me than all the world, more than mother or friend? If you cannot go with me I shall stay here in the Territory."

He tried to kiss away the tears, and Pakali clung to him until she had gained courage from his soothing assurances.

"See how much of a white woman I am," she said, presently. "If I had the true Chickasaw spirit I would send you across the world and you would never know that I was grieving every moment that you were away from me. But I shall show you that I am worthy to be your wife, for I shall be brave to-morrow."

"Let to-morrow take care of itself," Stuart answered. "To-night it is enough to know that we will let nothing part us."

They continued their walk. Pakali spoke little, even though Stuart told her in a dozen ways that he intended to remain at Moma Binna as long as she was needed there.

"Tell me that you have no more fears about our separation," insisted Stuart, as they entered the living room after the candles had been lighted.

"I shall have more courage to-morrow morning," Pakali replied. "The Little Mother has taught me to pray when I need strength to decide any question." She sank upon the seat near the fireplace, where the shadow hid her, just as it

had hidden her on the night when Beaumont told the story of Hattakowa's ring.

"Arnold, dear," she said, softly, "since our marriage I have the right to a mother's point of view. If some day I should have a son, and should call to him across the Great Waters, it would break my heart if he did not heed my cry. It is my right to help you to obey your mother's command. You must leave Moma Binna to-morrow."

CHAPTER XI

THE LONG JOURNEY

PAKALI had her way; because it was the right way. Stuart decided that he must make the long trip to Europe. The next morning was spent in preparations for the journey. While she calmly chose the few things her husband might leave at Moma Binna, Pakali showed the impassivity of the Indian. His guns and some of the books he had collected during his sojourn in the Territory were put aside. His broad-brimmed, light slouch hat was allowed to remain hanging upon the antlers in the living room; his canvas hunting suit was left on its hook in the closet of his sleeping room; his spurs were replaced upon the brass hook beside his dressing table.

After the servants had carried out the small trunk and the travelling bags, Pakali sank upon a stool in the bay window of her husband's bedroom. Here, since her marriage, she had often sat beside Stuart's armchair. As she looked about the disordered apartment she realised how its emptiness would make her heart ache in the days that were to come. It opened out of the little white alcove chamber that had been hers ever since her childhood, and both apartments had doors leading to the broad veranda.

"I do not know how I shall live when you are gone," Pakali said, with a little quiver of the lips. "It seems now as if I had always belonged to you—as if I had never lived until I felt the touch of your hand."

Stuart knelt beside her.

"Now that it is time for me to go away I am ready to change my mind," he declared, taking both her hands, and drawing her head down to him so that he could kiss her.

" We could not be happy together if either of us ignored duty," Pakali answered in a trembling voice. " But, oh, Moma Binna will be empty without you. Still, you will dwell in the house of my heart. There I have the door closed upon you so that you can never go away."

" Suppose I should forget to come back to my Chickasaw wife! " Stuart kissed Pakali as he spoke in jest, but when there was a look of terror in the big, dark eyes that gazed into his, he made haste to say: " You know I could not forget you even if I tried, for you hold me by a spell of witchery that I could never overcome."

" Even though you never came back to me, still I would keep you in the house of my heart. Though you might grow old there, and become a stranger, I would detain you as my guest long after you ceased to be my husband. Love brings to the door of an Indian woman's heart only one pilgrim who may enter."

" How safe you make me feel! " Stuart exclaimed, clasping her in his arms. " Once or twice to-day I have been almost afraid to let you wait for me in Tishomingo, when Hattakowa is so near."

Pakali drew away and flashed an indignant glance at him as she answered:

" Among the Chickasaws, men and women hold the marriage bond in reverence. We Indians are not yet civilised enough to be untrue to our pledges. My ancestors put to death every woman in the Nation who was unfaithful, and Hattakowa respects the tradition which forbids one man to covet another man's wife."

" Dear one, I did not mean to offend you," her husband apologised, " but it was worth while since I am weak enough now to want all sorts of comforting assurances."

" You will need years of example and precept before you can understand the Indian characteristics." Pakali shook her head as if she found her husband a slow pupil. " When

I go away with you I must be ever conscious of the fact that the reputation of my people is at stake." Pakali put her arms around her husband's neck. "We have no time to waste," she said; "I want to say good-bye to you here."

"Good-bye is a word I never use. Don't say good-bye, it is just *au revoir.*"

"And I don't like the French words you use. When the government at Washington gave this land to my people the promise ran that it should be ours 'as long as water runs and grass grows.' It is the form of pledge that means most to the Indian who lives close to nature, so I say to you 'as long as water runs and grass grows' I will love you, and longer, for love outlasts earthly things."

"You make me feel my unworthiness," Stuart said, with a rush of deep emotion. Like a child at its mother's knee he put his face down upon her lap. They were silent for a moment. Pakali stroked her husband's fair hair.

"It is your love, Arnold, that has given me holy visions," she whispered.

Stuart looked up to behold in her face a supreme exaltation. Then he raised her from her place and held her close to his heart until a voice outside proclaimed that it was time for him to leave Moma Binna.

After Stuart had said farewell to everyone in the household, he and Pakali walked down the path to the ledge where they had first met. Here they kissed each other for the last time.

Stuart would have turned back even then, but Pakali gently sent him away.

As Pakali watched the carriage descend the driveway and speed down the main street of Tishomingo, she waved her hand at her husband, who, looking back at her, beheld a picture that remained vivid long after the Indian Territory had become a far-off memory.

Week after week of the hot summer dragged by. Pakali,

who suffered agonies of loneliness at first, gradually became listless and pathetically patient as she watched at her mother's bedside. Letters from Stuart now and then aroused her from her lethargy and revived her spirits. She followed every stage of his long journey, tracing his route upon the map in the big atlas that her father kept in the living room. Notes telling her of her husband's love, and declaring that he would live only for the happy day when he should return to Pakali, came from Guthrie, Kansas City, and Chicago. Then from New York arrived a long letter enclosing seven separately folded pages, which were to be opened on the days when he would be on the ocean.

It was a long time before the envelope with a Paris postmark reached Tishomingo. In many closely written pages Stuart described how he had passed the days of his voyage in dreaming of the wife who was more beautiful than any woman he had seen in his travels. Pakali read the letter many times, and, while it told her all that her heart craved, it left her with a sense of Stuart's aloofness from her. This impression was due partly to the fact of her realisation that he was once more among the old influences which had moulded his life, for he mentioned casually his mother's friend, Miss Eleanor Dudley, a young woman of social prominence in the American colony of the French capital. The surgical operation that had been the cause of his unexpected trip had been delayed for several weeks until Mrs. Stuart could gain strength.

Meanwhile, Stuart complained that it would be dull, even in Paris, during the midsummer season. In a postscript, which was plainly an after-thought, Stuart told Pakali that, owing to his mother's highly nervous condition, he had delayed the announcement of his marriage. That was why there were not special messages from Mrs. Stuart and Miss Dudley, who would be sure to love his Chickasaw bride when he took her to his Chicago home.

Pakali put the letter, which gave her such strange unrest, into the bosom of her gown, and walked far out upon the hills. Passing cotton fields where the bolls were white in their snowy wealth, she paused to listen to the song of a belated mocking bird. The limpid notes broke the silence of the early evening and recalled moments when she and Stuart had paused to enjoy the song of the Southland bird that at night often awakens to trill a dreamy melody.

The familiar sound of the bird song opened the floodgates of her heart, and, as she turned to climb a hilly path, she looked through her tears at the darkening sky while she breathed a little prayer for strength with which to endure the enforced separation from her husband.

High up on the hillside she threw herself upon the ground where the pine needles had made a soft carpet, and here she wept until the soothing forces of nature quieted her perturbed spirit. It was twilight in the woods when she arose to retrace her steps toward home. As she stood in the shadows of the trees she heard the tread of a horse that was slowly coming down the rocky trail. She drew back in order to let the rider pass without recognising her. When near her, the horseman stopped to listen, as if he were conscious of her presence. Then she saw that it was Hattakowa, but she did not speak to him. In a moment he was out of the saddle, and, true to his Indian instincts, examining the trail. Turning toward Pakali he quickly found her.

"Why, Pakali, would you have let me pass you?" Hattakowa asked, standing before her with uncovered head.

"I don't know," she answered. "You have not been to Moma Binna for so long that I have the right to think that you do not care to see me."

"You are speaking as the white woman speaks," he replied, in a tone of rebuke. "Surely you know that I have stayed away from your house because I thought I had not the strength to behold you as the wife of another man. I meant

that you should go away before I should come again to Moma Binna."

Even as he spoke he turned his eyes away, but when Pakali made no reply he glanced at her long enough to understand that she had been weeping.

"Is your mother worse?"

"No," she answered, and then, because she had never kept any secret from Hattakowa, she explained: "A letter from Arnold, who is in Paris, caused me to feel lonely and far off from him. It is a beautiful letter, but it makes me realise that it must be months before he can come back to me."

"What are a few moons?" Hattakowa asked, obeying the old impulse to comfort her whenever she was in trouble. "The crescent will come in the sky, it will widen to the full circle, and it will wane quickly if you will but cease to count each separate day."

Pakali had begun to move toward the trail, and Hattakowa put out his hand as if he would help her in making the descent, but, distrustful of himself, he drew back lest, touching her, he might forget that she belonged to another man. He drew his horse's bridle through his arm, and together they walked back to Moma Binna.

After that night Hattakowa came and went as freely as if Pakali's marriage had not touched his life. His visits were pleasant diversion to Pakali, even though she seldom talked to him.

The Little Mother drooped more and more each day, and Beaumont, who never before had known fear, often had a look of terror in his eyes when he came out of the quiet room where the fragile little woman lay dying. Mammy 'Liza, acting as chief nurse, saw that the time was near when the Little Mother would go away from Moma Binna forever. The old negress persuaded Pakali to send for her Aunt Totopehah.

One evening, after family prayers had been said in Mrs.

Beaumont's bedroom, the Little Mother lay with one thin, white hand clasped in her husband's big palm, and the other resting upon Pakali, who had crept close to her on the bed. Now and then the sick woman opened her eyes, in which shone the light of peace and hope. Drowsily, she strove to speak, but when she could not articulate, her eyes told the loving messages she would have spoken.

The brief twilight faded, and Pakali whispered that her mother had fallen asleep. Softly she lifted the hand that rested upon her, and slipped around to where she could put her arms about her father's neck. Together they sat there a long time, until the physician came in to make his nightly call.

A servant, lighting one of the shaded candles, held it near the Little Mother's face.

"She does not need me," the physician said, turning to Beaumont and Pakali, who slowly comprehended that the Little Mother had gone forth to the Great Spirit.

CHAPTER XII

FATHER AND DAUGHTER

HALF a year had gone by since the Little Mother went away from Moma Binna, leaving Pakali to comfort her father. The father and daughter had passed a sorrowful time, although both strove to bear with fortitude the changed conditions of their lives. Beaumont gave many of his days to the public affairs of the Nation. Serious questions confronted the Chickasaws, and he was Governor Sands's chief adviser in all matters pertaining to action looking toward the inevitable allotment of lands.

Cole Mattison and his father, Peter Mattison, headed a faction which ceaselessly agitated the question of individual ownership of property. They called themselves leaders of a Progressive movement, and easily obtained the support of most of the younger Indians, in whom education and travel had bred a resentment against conditions which compelled them to remain wards of the United States instead of becoming citizens of the Republic. This party became an easy tool for the interloping white men who coveted the fertile acres and valuable mineral tracts belonging to the Indians.

For more than forty years the Chickasaws had allowed their cattle to feed upon the free ranges, and the wholesale leasing system aroused much opposition in the legislature. A Syndicate had agents at work for weeks before the viva voce election in the Nation, and Governor Sands was quick to see that his defeat was possible, inasmuch as his long service to the Chickasaws might be ignored in view of a possible increase of income through the leases. He and

Beaumont worked tirelessly for what they considered the good of the Nation. They desired to delay the allotment as long as possible, in order that the fullbloods and halfbreeds might be better qualified for the responsibilities of the severalty system of land tenure. They realised that a large proportion of the Chickasaws and Choctaws would be easy prey for the covetous and designing settlers who would come to the Territory in overwhelming numbers as soon as there was a chance to procure farms, timber tracts, and mining interests.

In the campaign Peter Mattison and his son showed that they were clever politicians. They frequently boasted that they had learned a thing or two in Texas, and it was evident that they were not loth to employ every shrewd measure that would serve their ends. Fortunately for Beaumont and Governor Sands, Ardmore and Wauchula, where the influence of the Mattisons was strongest, numbered few Indians in their steadily growing populations, for most of the Chickasaws lived outside the large towns. With John Oaktree's help the counties of Pontotoc, Pickens, Panola, and Tishomingo were canvassed.

Day after day Pakali was left alone at Moma Binna, and on the evening after the election, when her father came back from Ardmore with the announcement that Governor Sands could not be counted out, despite the persistent attempts made by the Progressive party, she exclaimed:

"Now I shall have you with me once more. I am glad Governor Sands is safe in office, but it seems to me his success has been bought at the cost of much weariness to my dear old father."

Stroking the big brown hand that had been laid upon her shoulder while the election news was being communicated to her, she looked into the furrowed face of Beaumont, who had aged much in the months that had passed since the Little Mother's death. Father and daughter went in together to the tea table, where Pakali sat behind the silver service with

water lily engraving, which her mother had prized so highly. Two extra plates were laid for possible guests, and, glancing at one on his right, Beaumont said:

"It is a long time since Hattakowa was last at Moma Binna. I am concerned about him, for he behaves strangely. He made the election come our way—at least John Oaktree says so—for he has a remarkable influence over the fullbloods, and he works with a fierce energy whenever the interests of the Chickasaws are at stake."

"At heart he is more intensely Indian than any other mixedblood in the Territory," Pakali said, as she put cream into her father's cup. She kept her eyes upon the task of pouring the tea, for since her marriage she could not speak of Hattakowa with the frankness that belonged to her girlhood days.

"Now and then some really savage traits show themselves in Hattakowa." Beaumont leaned back in his chair and spoke with concern in his tone. "He went to Kansas City to-day, and when I asked what business took him North, he declared that he was going to seek some recreation that would furnish excitement. That was only another manner of saying that he would give way to his mania for gambling. He is even more restless than he used to be."

Pakali made no answer.

"It is a disappointment to me that Hattakowa does not attend to business," Beaumont went on; "everything he touches turns to money, and he might be the most powerful man in the Chickasaw Nation if he chose to use his influence and wealth in the right direction. I suppose we ought to be thankful, however, that the savage in him does not crave fire water."

"Is Hattakowa savage in any other way excepting gambling?" Pakali asked. "He likes to boast of his Indian traits, but I have found him always tender and gentle."

"He never forgets an injury, and he has the old Indian

spirit of revenge, but I hope he may be given few causes for the awakening of his primitive passions."

The evening meal had been late and it was dark when Pakali and her father left the table. Beaumont went down to the village, where he was to meet some of the newly elected members of the legislature at the Poyner Tavern.

When Pakali was left alone in the living room, she drew her favourite stool before the big fireplace, in which some light wood was burning, for chilly nights followed the warm days of the early spring. She thought of her husband, as she did in every hour when her mind was free to follow its natural inclination. Stuart's letters had been far apart recently, and when they came they told her of the things he had seen in his trip through the south of France with his mother and Miss Dudley. The surgical operation had been successful, but Mrs. Stuart's recovery was slow. Stuart had held out vague promises that he would return to the United States before the summer, but between the lines Pakali read much that made her heart ache. In spirit, as well as in body, Stuart was far away from Indian Territory. He did not omit the endearing terms which made each of his letters at least conventional in form, but the soul of the lonely wife saw beyond the writing.

For several months Pakali had been awed by the contemplation of the miracle of motherhood. In her heart had been born a new love, so mysterious that she could hold it only as a direct revelation from Heaven. She was to be an instrument of the Creator in sending a new soul into the world. While she cherished the sweet hope, there was none to whom she could speak of the coming of her child. The delicacy and reticence of the Indian forbade her from talking about it with her father. Often when she wrote to her husband she meant to tell him how she waited for his son —somehow she always dreamed of another Arnold Stuart— but, more and more, she had the impression that the man in Europe was becoming a stranger to her. Always now she

wept when she strove to send him happy letters. Once, when she had poured out something of the desolation in her heart, Stuart had answered that he expected her to have the uncomplaining patience for which the Indian women were celebrated, at least in the story books.

As she watched the play of the flames, Pakali felt unusually depressed. Every day, through all the months, her soul had cried out to her husband, and she had prayed for fortitude. Now and then doubts knocked at the house of her heart where, she had told Arnold, he was securely shut in. But she would not listen to them. Her loyalty gave her an answer to every question that assailed her faith. If her love had not been of the quality that casts away every misgiving, she might have been jealous of Miss Eleanor Dudley, about whom the letters from France contained more and more as the weeks went by. Pakali was proud to think that Arnold's frankness proved how little the other woman meant to him. Still, over all her reasoning, rose the one cry for her husband. She needed him; she wanted him to come back.

Looking into the fire, Pakali saw once more the pictures of the past. Glancing around the living room, now but dimly lighted by the burning logs, she recalled how Arnold Stuart had sat at the round table listening to the story of Hattakowa's ring. She remembered the room as it had looked decked with the greenery of the woods on her wedding day; and she beheld again the Little Mother's coffin standing where the light from the windows fell upon the still, white face. She rose to her feet with a nervous cry, and her eyes fell upon her husband's hat, which hung upon the antlers long used as a rack for guns and head gear. The hat gave her assurance of the reality of Arnold's existence. Often when she thought of him their summer romance seemed like a pleasant dream.

With trembling hands Pakali lighted the candles on the high mantel shelf. On the big, round table was her work

basket, in which rested a fluff of lace and a cloud of thin white material. She took up her sewing. It was such a wee garment which she was making that it required a dainty touch, but her slender fingers were suddenly clumsy.

As she sewed she often wondered how her baby would look. She thought of him as fair and blue-eyed like his father, but somehow she never could imagine a distinct portrait of the little one, although she often thought she could feel his head nestling against her breast. She put down her needlework and sat for a time with her elbows on the table and her face resting upon her hands. The firelight showed a wan, care-worn Pakali, into whose eyes had come the solemn light of womanhood. The droop at the corners of the mouth had been emphasised and the cheek bones, made prominent by loss of the girlhood roundness of contour, betrayed her Indian ancestry. While she sat there, bravely forcing back the tears, she heard footsteps on the porch. The door opened, and Hattakowa's mother came in, followed by one of the servants, who carried her travelling bag.

"Why, Aunt Totopehah, I am so glad to see you!" exclaimed Pakali, putting her arm around Mrs. Dixon's neck.

As the older woman embraced her, Pakali could not control her emotion, and with a little sob she told how lonely she had been.

"Hattakowa has gone away, and I came to make you a long visit," announced Mrs. Dixon as she began to take off her bonnet. "The ranch is too dull even for an Indian woman," she continued, "so I closed the house and there is no telling when you will see me going home."

It was like Aunt Totopehah to pretend that her visit was made for selfish reasons, and Pakali smilingly told her so.

Over a dainty supper, brought in upon a tray, and arranged upon the round table in the living room, Mrs. Dixon and Pakali gossiped quite as if there were no serious troubles in all the world.

CHAPTER XIII

THE LITTLE CHIEFTAIN

EARLY one May morning there came to Moma Binna a new member of the Chickasaw Nation. It was with a lusty cry that he heralded the beginning of his conscious life. When he opened his eyes in the brilliant sunshine of the southern day he found the world so dazzling that he complained vigorously. Later, after he was wrapped in the swaddling clothes which prevented him from moving his sturdy arms and legs, he lay on the bed in his father's long-deserted room.

Tiptoeing in through the veranda door, Beaumont looked for the first time into the face of his grandchild. The strong old Indian reverently bent his head as he gazed upon the babe, whose lineaments had that strange look of age which foretells something of the appearance the countenance will wear when the little journey through the world is completed. The infant's head was nobly moulded, and the thick growth of dark hair proclaimed the fact that his aboriginal heritage had asserted itself in the physical characteristics of the Indian. Although Beaumont tiptoed around the bed several times, waiting impatiently for the little Chickasaw to open his eyes, the infant slept on comfortably.

" He is a fine child," declared Mrs. Dixon, coming into the room. " Have you seen how tall he is? " She drew back the silken coverlid, and, finding the baby's feet, declared that the child had an unusual height.

" It is so long since I welcomed Pakali that I don't know much about babies," said the grandfather; " but it seems to me a promising boy has come to Moma Binna."

" Promising! " repeated Mrs. Dixon. " Why, he is even

stronger-looking than Hattakowa was, and you know how you used to praise him when he was small."

The babe opened his eyes with a cry that expressed his dislike of too much familiarity, and Mrs. Dixon took him up in her arms.

"Well, it is too bad to bother anyone who is so much a stranger in Tishomingo," she said, in the cooing tones women are wont to employ in addressing children too young to comprehend what is said to them. "He shall come to his Aunt Totopehah, who is very proud of her hour-old kinsman."

"Has Pakali ever expressed any preference about a name?" Beaumont asked after Mrs. Dixon had taken her place in the little rocking chair that belonged to the baby's mother.

"Yes." There was a moment's hesitation. "She would like to combine your name with that of the child's father. What do you think of George Arnold Stuart?"

Beaumont turned his broad back upon her as he began to pace the floor. He had crossed the room twice before he stopped near his grandchild.

"If Pakali's love for her husband prompts her to call her son Arnold, let it be so, but my name must not be mingled with the white man's."

He stooped to touch the cheek of the babe. "To me he shall be Push-Kush-Miko—The Little Chieftain."

It was a rare day of exquisite beauty that Push-Kush-Miko had chosen upon which to make his entrance into the world. A cloudless sky stretched over the green earth. The roses were in bloom and the trees, full leaved, sheltered many song birds. In the hour of dawn, just before Miko's first cry thrilled his mother's heart with joy, a belated robin had chanted sad notes which now and then touched the higher strains of joy and hope.

The robin's song had been silenced and a brooding quiet

had fallen upon Moma Binna when at noon time it was whispered that Pakali was near unto death. In her narrow bed, in the little white room that had been hers during all her girlhood, the young mother lay so still that it seemed as if she had fallen asleep forever. The faintest pulse-beat gave assurance that she was yet alive. Two physicians watched her, and, as the afternoon shadows fell, both agreed that a last urgent message should be sent to her absent husband.

For many days Pakali had watched for Stuart, who had been in Chicago more than a month, but he had sent excuses for his long delay in returning to the Territory. His neglected business made imperative demands upon his time, he said, and then his mother was in a precarious condition after her long journey across the ocean. For forty-eight hours before the day of Miko's birth, Pakali had been in the valley of the shadow of death. Three times Beaumont had sent Indian couriers to Wauchula with telegrams telling Stuart of Pakali's serious illness. When the first answer had brought an affectionate greeting to Pakali, and the statement that it was impossible for him to leave unless his presence was absolutely necessary, Mrs. Dixon had urged that Beaumont should tell him why Pakali's life hung in the balance. Then, for the first time, the old Indian spoke of the indignation in his heart. For Pakali's sake he had concealed his resentment against the white man who had dared to neglect his daughter. Now the final test had come. If Stuart did not hasten to Tishomingo, he should forfeit all claims to consideration and steps should be taken to probe the causes of his growing indifference to Pakali's rights.

Beaumont sent the second telegram and again came a temporising reply. This aroused all the Indian pride in the heart of the Chickasaw. He loved his daughter better than his own life. He waited until Miko had come to them and then with a hand that shook he wrote the words: "If

you do not come at once, Pakali will be dead to you even though she may live beyond to-day."

It was not until the next morning that a courier brought to Moma Binna the reply to Beaumont's ultimatum to his son-in-law. Stuart asked him to reserve judgment, and repeated the declaration that it was impossible to leave Chicago. The reasons, Stuart said, he had written fully in a letter that would reach Tishomingo in two days. The letter came while Pakali was still hovering between life and death. It told Beaumont that Stuart had jeopardised his position with his law firm by his continued absence, and that Congressman Fordham, who had made a trip from a neighbouring State, where he controlled the Republican party, had demanded his services in an important matter. Any dereliction at what was a critical time might thwart every ambitious plan which Stuart had laid for his future. In a few lame sentences the writer mentioned that, of course, he was working for Pakali's future as well as his own.

The old Chickasaw read the well-worded letter several times. He had taken it to the living room where he could study it carefully. It was his first thought that he would send Hattakowa to Chicago in order to ascertain just what Stuart was doing. Beaumont had enough knowledge of men and of the world to guess that changed environment had made Stuart's Indian Territory love affair appear as an incident that became less important as it receded into the past. It had been one of the scandals of the Five Nations that white men often married Indians girls, only to desert them whenever the temptation to shirk domestic responsibility presented itself. Most of the abandoned wives had belonged to the families of fullbloods, or halfbreeds of the humbler class. It had never occurred to Beaumont that his beloved Pakali could be made the victim of an unprincipled white man. Because the Little Mother had made him feel that he belonged partly to the dominant race, he had accepted

Stuart with an unwavering confidence in the young man's integrity. Now he believed that his daughter must be counted among those who had lost happiness in marrying outside the Chickasaw Nation. While he was pondering over Arnold's letter, Governor Sands arrived at Moma Binna.

"I came to pay my respects to the latest Chickasaw registered on the rolls of the Nation," said the Governor, as he shook hands with his friend. "I hear you have called your grandson Push-Kush-Miko, but I suppose he has no idea that he has come to join the ranks of the Non-Progressive Indians."

Beaumont smiled. "So far he has appeared to be rather a self-assertive young Indian," he said, and then with a sudden change of manner, exclaimed: "If I have my way Miko will belong altogether to my people!"

"What do you mean?" The Governor's good-natured face became serious in an instant.

"I mean——" Beaumont hesitated, as if he could not speak of the humiliation of his family; "I mean that I fear Arnold Stuart has repented of marrying an Indian girl."

"What makes you think that he is exercising the white man's hereditary privilege of breaking pledges with the Indian?"

Governor Sands folded his sinewy arms as he spoke with a tinge of bitterness in his tone. He listened with a stern look while Beaumont told him how Pakali had waited for Stuart's return, and how, even when she appeared to be dying, a most urgent message brought only weak excuses.

"In the summer time I generally take a vacation," said Governor Sands, looking out of the window lest his eyes should betray the anger that he felt. "I will go to Chicago next week, and while I am there I will find out all you should know about your son-in-law. We shall try to think well of him until we know he is something worse than a careless husband."

"You have been my brother more than my friend, Henry Sands," Beaumont answered. And thus it was agreed that the Governor should undertake the mission Beaumont dared not trust himself to perform. The two Chickasaws sat together smoking for a long time before Governor Sands was reminded of his chief errand to Moma Binna.

"I must see the Little Chieftain," he said, as he refilled his pipe from a crude, earthenware bowl the Little Mother had once bought from a blanketed Kiowa. "If his father should be unfaithful to his duty the boy can be adopted at the next session of the legislature, and he shall be always my ward as long as he lives in the Territory."

Miko was brought into the living room by Mammy 'Liza, who had renewed her youth with her accession to the post of child's nurse. The baby opened a pair of large eyes when Mammy 'Liza put him upon the lap of his grandfather. Miko appeared to feel that some untoward influence attended his advent, for he gazed solemnly at the rugged face of the Governor.

"If one can judge at this time it is safe to say that Miko will be very much of an Indian. I don't see much resemblance to his pale-faced father," commented Governor Sands.

"He sho' a red Injun now," exclaimed Mammy 'Liza, "but you cahn't 'magine how he'll look bime by." The negro woman watched Beaumont balance the infant upon his knee, and when she saw that the blanket had been allowed to slip up over the child's face, while the long clothes became a shapeless bunch, she took back her charge with the reproving words: "Laws, Massa, but you'se awkward!"

CHAPTER XIV

CLOSING THE GATES

WEAK and wan, Pakali lay for many days in her little white bed. Under her pillow she kept a note that Stuart had sent to her with the letter of explanation addressed to her father. Now that she knew that she could not expect him to come to her, she appeared to be suffering a reaction from the long nervous strain under which she had lived before the birth of her child. Her dark eyes, which looked larger than ever before now that she was pale and thin, had in them a look of such dumb suffering that, whenever he came to see her and Miko, her father avoided meeting her glance.

The babe thrived, and when his black head lay upon his mother's bosom Pakali was transfigured with the glory of her motherhood, which had in it the prescience of a great sorrow that waited until she should be strong enough to meet it. Her convalescence was slow. Week after week passed without bringing any word from Stuart, and the constant watching for tidings wore upon the young mother.

One morning when Pakali awoke she remembered that it was her birthday anniversary. The quick tears came as she recalled the events of the last year, and she hid her face in her pillow, lest Mammy 'Liza should notice that she was weeping. The voice of Miko, who stirred in his cradle, reminded her that life had a new interest, and she asked the nurse to put the baby beside her. Clasping Miko in a close embrace, she held him until the contact with his warm little body brought her the peculiar sensation which is part of the joy that a woman feels as she holds her child in her arms. Miko went to sleep as soon as he was near his mother, and Pakali studied the baby face with an anxious, loving scrutiny.

She had hoped that her son would resemble his father, but except in the breadth of his forehead, and the shape of his chin, there was not the slightest hint that Miko had inherited any of the Stuart comeliness. The child was a quarterblood in whom there chanced to be more of the Indian look than was discoverable in many a halfbreed. Aunt Totopehah had laughingly remarked that the baby was like his grandfather, and Pakali saw that this was true. She hugged Miko to her breast, as if she would still the ache in her heart, but the child awoke, putting out his small fists in indignant protest. Pakali kissed the tiny hands and the soft, round cheek, crooning in a low tone a little lullaby that she had heard the Chickasaw women sing to their children when their babies had become so far civilised that they had lost the passivity of the pappoose.

The heavy tread of Beaumont, as he came along the veranda, caused Pakali to brush away her tears. She knew her father was coming for his first visit of the day, and she strove always to greet him with a smile. One of the negro housemaids opened the glass door for the master of Moma Binna, but when he reached the threshold of Pakali's room Beaumont hesitated, as if he felt reluctant about entering. The sunlight, falling upon his big head and broad shoulders, revealed the fact that the old Indian was carrying some great burden of trouble. With an effort Beaumont finally went to the bedside.

"Where is Miko?" he questioned, glancing at the empty cradle, and Pakali drew aside the coverings which hid the babe slumbering at her breast. Beaumont sank upon a chair, that looked too frail to hold his great weight.

"Are you not feeling well, father?" Pakali asked, for she saw that he looked even more aged and careworn than at any other time since her mother's death.

"There is nothing to complain of so far as my health is concerned."

Beaumont took his daughter's hand.

"You haven't any bad news, I hope? Somehow I cannot help wondering about Arnold. There are times when I fear he may be ill. It is long, very long since he last wrote to me."

Pakali read in her father's face the truth, that he had brought her some information concerning her husband. Her poor heart beat wildly as, holding the baby against her breast, she strove to wait calmly for her father's answer.

"Suspense is harder to bear than any knowledge; don't you think it is, dear?" Beaumont questioned, hesitatingly.

"Yes. Don't try to spare me. Tell me, Arnold is not dead?"

Pakali raised herself upon her pillows, lifting Miko into her lap.

"Your husband is alive and well," said Beaumont, his voice stern in spite of his efforts to speak dispassionately. "But, Pakali,—can you bear it?—he desires to forget that he is married to an Indian."

Pakali bent far forward as if she were cringing from physical pain.

"Oh, I cannot believe it! How could you know what you tell me? You speak your fears, and they are not facts."

Beaumont let her feel the first poignancy of the agony he was compelled to make her suffer before he explained.

"For a month Governor Sands has been in Chicago watching Arnold Stuart."

"How could he so insult my husband!" Pakali cried out with indignation.

"The most extreme measures were justified. When your husband declared it impossible to come to you in your hour of need, it was your father's duty to learn the true reason. Governor Sands discovered that Arnold Stuart's name was much in the society columns of the Chicago newspapers. The night his son was born his mother gave a fashionable ball.

He is making some headway politically, and he confessed to Governor Sands that just now it would spoil his prospects if it became known that he had made—what he called it—an unconventional marriage."

"He told Governor Sands that I might stand in the way of his success?" Pakali questioned, her pride giving her courage.

"Yes, Governor Sands went to his office, where he had a long talk with the young man." There was scorn in the old Chickasaw's voice as he went on relentlessly: "It appears that what is called the 'silk stocking' element of the fashionable ward in which Arnold Stuart lives is putting him forward as a member of the city council. From this stepping stone he probably hopes to rise to a place where he can wield the sort of influence his friend, Congressman Fordham, turns into money."

Pakali heard but vaguely her father's last words, for she was absorbed in the one thought that Arnold had come to look upon her as a burden—to think of their marriage as a mistake.

"Did Arnold make Governor Sands think that he meant to desert me and Miko?" Pakali asked the question in a quiet voice.

"Governor Sands said nothing about Miko. We had agreed it was best he should not hear he had a son if he were unworthy to be the father of our Chickasaw boy."

"That was right," said Pakali, looking upon the face of Miko. "I—I will write to Arnold to let him know that I give him up forever. It would have been more honest if he had told me these things, for he should have known that I love him too much to stand in the way of his happiness."

Exhausted, she lay back upon the pillows after her father had taken Miko from her. There was a long silence. Beaumont kept back the bitter words of censure for Stuart that his indignation prompted him to speak.

" Father, I would rather you would write the letter for me." In a muffled voice the words were spoken slowly from among the pillows. " It may be a long time before I have strength enough to tell Arnold he need have no fear that Pakali will ruin his life, and there should be no delay in sending him a message."

" I will write the letter for you," her father promised.

" When? " she asked; " to-day? "

" Yes, to-day."

Beaumont put the baby back beside Pakali, and, stooping, kissed his daughter, whose drawn face had lost the light of hope.

" Thank God that you have been given this son," he whispered; " the child may compensate for all your sufferings." Then he went out of the room with lagging steps.

Miko had awakened. Again Pakali held him to her aching heart.

" The white man has shut the gates of his golden city upon the Indian woman and her child," she murmured.

BOOK II

CHAPTER XV

SUMMERTIME

AGAIN it was summer in the Indian Territory. The crystal waters of many a swollen creek emptied into the rivers that flowed toward the Mississippi and the Gulf of Mexico. The spring rains had been frequent, and nowhere between the Atlantic and the Pacific was there to be found a more beautiful garden spot than that comprised in the many thousand acres which, since 1854, had been held in the name of the five civilised tribes—The Cherokees, Creeks, Choctaws, Chickasaws, and Seminoles.

In this summertime, when every mountain stream was full and every river ran high between fertile banks, when every mile of prairie was covered with lush verdure, and when every hillside was green, the old pledge had been broken. Water still ran and grass still grew in the Territory, but the Curtis Bill, passed by Congress, and signed by the President of the United States, legalised the allotment of lands so that each member of the Five Nations should have "so far as possible, a fair and equal share thereof, considering the character and fertility of the soil and the location and value of the land." In a few years the lands, once the heritage of the Indian, would pass to the white man.

The Bill entitled: "An Act for the protection of the People of the Indian Territory, and other Purposes," provided for the extension of the jurisdiction of the United States courts, the establishment of town-sites, the enrollment of tribal citizens, and for innumerable other civilising measures. The duties of the Dawes Commission, which had headquarters at Muscogee, were carefully outlined. Govern-

ment representatives sent to the Indian Territory to encourage reluctant Chickasaws to enter into the Atoka Agreement, laid stress upon the fact that the White Father at Washington was true to his word, inasmuch as the sixty-six thousand or more Indian citizens would be able to hold their lands in severalty, after they had provided generously for the twenty thousand negro freedmen in the Territory.

In the train of these federal agents had come a horde of speculators, who from ignorant and improvident members of the Five Nations succeeded in obtaining options and claims upon prospective individual holdings. Vainly George Beaumont and Henry Sands worked to prevent the robbery of the Chickasaws. With Judge Maury as their legal adviser, they were now and then able to circumvent some bold scheme of the land grabbers, but the two men were powerless to guard more than a small number against the unscrupulous fortune hunters who poured in from north and south, from east and west.

Wauchula had grown marvellously in the five years that had passed since the Beaumonts took Stuart to the church fair. The town, once distinguished for its lack of any form of government, was now a duly incorporated city. Streets had been surveyed and building lines established. Waterworks and street lights were not unattainable ambitions.

Hattakowa and Beaumont walked down the main street to the extreme end of the town, where was situated the little white cottage Mrs. Dixon had built, because she wanted a place in which she could pass her time when she became lonely on the ranch. Here they found Mrs. Dixon and Pakali sitting upon the porch, for the night was warm and a crescent moon was dimly lighting the tiny garden, where many roses were blooming.

"You are back early," said Mrs. Dixon. "I thought you went to a meeting of the Non-Progressive Indians."

"We did, but the Chickasaws were not in a talkative

mood to-night," Beaumont answered, " and Ogden Maury was quick in writing the outline of the protest we are going to send to Washington."

" Young Maury has become more of an Indian in sympathy than some of the fullbloods," Mrs. Dixon declared with a laugh. " Since he married Virginia Mattison he has become more indignant at Indian wrongs than anyone else in the Nation, except"—and she leaned forward to tap Hattakowa upon the shoulder—" except this son of mine, whose Chickasaw and Choctaw blood is often at the boiling point."

" Even Mrs. Maury is something of an Indian nowadays." It was Pakali who spoke, from a far-off corner of the porch, where her light gown vaguely revealed her presence. " Her chief dread used to be that she might become grandmother to a family of Indians, but she seems to think that Virginia's children are the most remarkable little creatures in the world, and she loves Reginald, who looks as if he were a fullblood, much more than the little red-haired Genevieve."

" Think to what depths we Indians have fallen when the children who have Chickasaw and Choctaw blood in their veins are called Reginald and Genevieve! " said Hattakowa. " Do you wonder that I am more of a savage every day I live? "

His rich voice had an earnest ring beneath the jesting tone. The moon, coming out from behind a cloud, showed his face and figure plainly, and they who looked at him laughed at his assumption that he was still a barbarian.

" Young Maury is going to get into trouble with his father-in-law and brother-in-law," said Beaumont. " The Mattisons are likely to carry their so-called progressive principles to a point where there will be an open rupture with the squaw man who allies himself to the other side."

" The day is not far off when disagreements upon the subject of Indian progressiveness will not be confined to

families; it will divide our whole Nation," prophesied Mrs. Dixon.

"Totopehah, have you been reading the signs again?" Beaumont asked, laughing carelessly. "Perhaps you can tell us how many acres of land each Chickasaw will have when Uncle Sam finishes his little problem in long division. At the rate that car-loads of fraudulent claimants are being brought in for enrollment we are likely to receive about enough for a nigger's corn patch."

"One does not have to read the skies or listen to the woodland sounds to find out that we shall have little enough by the time we are free and equal citizens of the United States." Mrs. Dixon spoke with a touch of bitterness. "When Hattakowa was a baby it was figured that each one of us Chickasaws and Choctaws could count his share by thousands of acres."

"It is the Indian with the large family who will be the rich man when the allotment is completed," said Beaumont, as he rose to light his pipe. "There's a squaw man over in Paul's valley who has thirteen children. There may be others by the time the Dawes Commission investigates his claim. He is the most worthless fellow within a radius of an hundred miles, but he will be in a position to make an advantageous deal with some of the land-grabbing syndicates."

"Are you speaking of Gee-Haw Blikens?" Hattakowa inquired. "He doesn't live in Paul's valley any more; he has taken up a whole valley of his own up north, near here. They tell the story that when one of the Blikens family of children was drowned in a well last month, Gee-Haw sighed mournfully: 'That there youngun's death has lost me perhaps eight hundred acres of land.'"

"What an unkind story, Hattakowa," Pakali exclaimed reprovingly.

The two men laughed as they assured her that Blikens was

indeed a mercenary man, and the sound of their voices was heard in a first-floor bedroom, where a well-grown boy of four was sleeping. He stirred uneasily. Then, raising himself in bed, he listened for several moments. Drowsily tumbling upon his feet, the child ran out to the porch.

" Big grandfather is happy," cried Miko, quickly climbing upon Beaumont's knee. Clad in his long, white robe Miko might easily have been mistaken for a little girl, and Hattakowa teasingly informed the boy that he supposed Genevieve Maury had come to see them.

This insinuation Miko proudly ignored, for he was busy searching his grandfather's pockets for anything he might wish to confiscate.

" Miko, dear, you must go back to bed," Pakali admonished, gently.

The child rested his black head upon Beaumont's expansive shirt front.

" Let me stay a little while. I want to ask the Man Looking for the Sun what happened to the fourth little fish he told me about. I can 'member three of 'em, but the other I forget."

" The fourth fish was not foolish, Miko," Hattakowa answered, " for he stayed at home in his little pond."

" And was he wise and happy? " Miko leaned far forward over his grandfather's protecting arm in order that he might listen intently.

" The story does not tell us that. Each one who hears it is to decide for himself."

" Mother, tell me, tell me."

Miko's appeal brought Pakali from her place to sit upon the step at her father's feet.

" I don't know the story, so how can I judge whether the little fish was happy or unhappy? " she said.

" The Man Looking for the Sun knows it. He told it to me," Miko said.

" All the fishes lived in a little stream," explained Hattakowa, " and three were discontented. One longed for wings, and by and by he found he could fly. So he left the little stream, and, soaring far under the hot sun, he came to the desert, where he died. The second longed for the great ocean, and an eel that had come into the little stream offered to show him the way. They swam and swam until they reached the salt water, but before the little fish had time to admire the beautiful shells and the waving sea grasses a big fish came along and swallowed him. The third little fish often rose to the top of the water, where he could look out upon the world. Here he found, one early morning, a tempting breakfast in the shape of a fine angle worm. He nibbled at the worm and lo! he was caught upon a terrible hook and dragged out of the stream to die slowly. The fourth little fish, who stayed at home without longing to see the world, lived to a good old age."

" I like that story," Miko said, clapping his hands. " I shall 'member now what happened to the fourth little fish."

" It has an especially fine moral for Chickasaws," commented Hattakowa with a smile. " I always feel like the second little fish whenever I go to Kansas City."

" But my Miko must go out into the world," declared Pakali.

Miko slipped from his grandfather's lap. Throwing himself into Hattakowa's arms, he cried:

" When I am big I shall be a great hunter, like the Man Looking for the Sun."

Hattakowa stroked the child's soft hair.

" Your mother wants you to go into the world, not the woods," he replied. " She would have you live as a white man, not as an Indian."

" I would have my son escape the humiliations that are the lot of the Indian," Pakali said. She was silent for a moment, then, with an effort, she went on: " Miko is only

one-eighth Chickasaw and Choctaw, but it is my ambition to make him proud that he is an Indian. He shall be educated with the idea that when he comes to manhood he may be able to work for our dying race. I am glad he looks so much like an Indian, for his dark eyes and brown skin will help him to gain the confidence of our people."

" If Miko's hair were light, if he were indeed a pale face, I could not love him," asserted Hattakowa, resting the boy's nodding head against his arm.

" You remember that Miko was six months old before Hattakowa would look at him," said Mrs. Dixon. " Even though I told him that the child was a perfect little Indian, he waited until we were sure the baby would not outgrow his Chickasaw-Choctaw appearance."

" It seems a long time since Miko was a baby." Pakali had moved close to Hattakowa, and she spoke softly, looking into the face of her distant kinsman. " When he first came to me I could not have believed that I should be able to go on with my life."

Pakali's soft tones had a tremolo in them and her father, leaning forward, took her hand with an affectionate pressure.

" The Little Mother always preached that we must not live unto ourselves," he said. " There is much for you to do here among the Indians of the Chickasaw Nation."

Miko, who had drowsed as he nestled in Hattakowa's arms, murmured in a disturbed dream: " The fourth little fish—the fourth little fish——"

" Push-Kush-Miko is not comfortable. Shall I carry him to bed? " asked Hattakowa, with his face close to the child's. Rising, he bore Pakali's son into the house.

CHAPTER XVI

AN EXPERIMENT IN FRIENDSHIP

BECAUSE her father had used all his powers of persuasion Pakali had consented to accept her aunt's invitation to visit for several weeks in Wauchula. After the crushing realisation that her husband desired to desert her, more than a year had passed before Pakali recovered her health. Her father had written a stern letter, in which he told Stuart that Pakali lived no longer for the white man who could not hear her cry of loneliness and agony. To this Pakali had added a postscript, penned with a weak hand: "The gate of your golden city has been closed against me. To-day I put a bolt outside the gate, lest in pity you may some day desire to open it."

After that the baby helped to keep the sad-hearted young mother alive. In a year or two the pain in Pakali's heart was dulled, but as time went by she felt the morbid sensitiveness about meeting her friends increase instead of diminish. When Miko did not occupy her attention she passed much time with her books and she went back to her long-neglected music. It was odd, she thought, as she sat at the grand piano in the parlour, that Stuart had seldom heard her play. She was glad the music was not associated with her ill-fated romance, and she found that it healed the hurts when her sore spirit became rebellious. At first the outdoor world failed to soothe her in the old way, because every walk and drive near Tishomingo was associated with Stuart. In time, however, nature again spoke to her directly instead of through some memory. Only one place forever held associations too sacred to be disturbed or outlived—that

was the nook down by Pennington Creek. There she had talked to Arnold Stuart on the first day of their acquaintance. There, where the waters murmured, her heart had awakened to the call of love. There, walled up in a crevice of the rock, were the bits of wood with which she had marked the most precious days of her life.

Since her disillusionment four years had gone by, one so much like another that, looking back she remembered nothing excepting little incidents connected with her child. One month was made eventful because Miko learned to walk; another was marked by his recovery from an infantile disease; and still another stood out by reason of his first appearance in trousers. Now that Miko was four years old Beaumont frequently pointed out the necessity of considering the child's education, and he hinted that Pakali could not afford to seclude herself in Moma Binna lest she might do wrong to her son, who was entitled to the best advantages. Miko must not grow up to find his mother living apart from the world. He must find her not unlike the mothers of other boys. He must have friends and playmates. For that reason she had nerved herself for the visit to Wauchula.

Mrs. Dixon and Pakali had risen early, for they had planned to make some changes in the interior of the cottage.

"A woman who has no daughter finds it hard to keep up with the times," Mrs. Dixon had said with a sigh, as she looked about the living room, which was stiff and uninviting in the disposal of the tables and chairs, the hanging of pictures and the draping of curtains. The two negro servants were brought in to move things at Pakali's direction. Mrs. Dixon had exercised good taste in her choice of mattings and rattan furniture, and Pakali soon transformed the living-room, upon the floor of which Navajo blankets were spread. A bowl of roses was placed upon the table beside Hattakowa's tobacco jar, and the picturesque pipe rack that Mrs. Dixon had forbidden her son to bring into the place

where she received her company, was hung over the mantel. Hattakowa's books were arranged upon low shelves near his favourite easy chair and Mrs. Dixon's best sofa cushions were put out of sight because they were such elaborate specimens of needlework that they could not be used. In their place Pakali piled pillows covered with pretty chintzes.

By noon the whole cottage had been transformed, even the bay-windowed dining-room had received a share of attention.

When Hattakowa came in to the midday dinner he was quick to express his appreciation of the changes.

"Pakali, you are always my good angel!" he exclaimed. "How did you manage to persuade mother to let me be comfortable in her best room? I shall be inclined to stay in the cottage all the time."

"I wish you would leave the ranch forever," Mrs. Dixon said. "We ought to build a big house here with a special wing for Pakali and Miko."

Standing in the doorway Hattakowa stifled the longing in his heart, yet he dared not trust himself to speak.

The negro cook came to ask Mrs. Dixon if she wished to see whether a dish of "Tom Fuller" was prepared to suit her, and, while a consultation was being held over the hulled corn, Hattakowa and Pakali were left tête-à-tête.

"It is good to have you here with us," said Hattakowa, standing near the chair in which Pakali was resting after her morning's activities. "I meant to go back to the ranch to-day, but I could not bear the thought of the loneliness there after these few days with you."

"I have been almost happy since I came to Wauchula," Pakali answered. "It has seemed as if we were boy and girl again."

"I remember," he answered in steady tones, "that you are the wife of a white man who was given the power to win your love. I knew that you would not forgive me if I killed him, but once I was not too proud or too good to dream

that I might some day supersede him. Then I stayed away from you for fear I should reveal my weakness and unworthiness. In the nights when I lay out under the sky after long days of hunting, I dared to picture you in my home. I tried to think that you were so much a white woman that you might some day obtain a divorce."

Pakali rose with a quick gesture that indicated the pain she suffered from the opening of old wounds. "Hattakowa, you are cruel," she cried.

"I do not mean to be, but, after the long silence, we must understand each other."

Hattakowa placed his hands upon her arms and gently put her back into her chair.

"Pakali, even though there have been times when I thought you might belong to me at last, there came the final realisation that the great love would not let me call you my wife while the white man, the father of your child, still lived," he said solemnly. "Then, in imagination, I took Arnold Stuart's life. A thousand times since he made you suffer I have known the fierce delight of killing him. As I stand here talking with you, I wonder that I have let these four years pass without taking the blood vengeance that your wrongs demand."

He paused to control the tumult in his breast.

"Now, I am stronger," he assured her. "Since I may not claim you for my own, I may yet be near you now and then, and to Miko I may give the affection that would have belonged to the sons who will never be mine."

Pakali's face paled as she listened. "Hush, Hattakowa," she said brokenly. "I thought you had outlived what you call the great love."

"Then I have been a better actor than I supposed I could be," replied Hattakowa. "Here in my own house I should not tell you the truth in the candid way that is the Indian's, but we were ever so sincere in dealing with each other that

I could not come to you with the longing to enjoy something of the old companionship unless I told you that you are still in my innermost consciousness not only the Star Woman, but the woman to be desired above all others. I shall not disturb you by speaking of my love, but it is only right that you should understand how impossible it is for me to play that I am your brother."

"Shall we try to make the best of what is left to us, Hattakowa?" Pakali looked through her tears at the strong face of her distant kinsman.

Miko, rushing in with a round, white ball of a puppy, paused for a moment to look first into the face of his mother and then to scan the countenance of Hattakowa.

"Miko has been good. Why does mother cry?" the boy said with the egotism of childhood.

Pakali lifted him in her arms. "Miko brings smiles, not tears," she answered.

CHAPTER XVII

THE CYCLONE

Mrs. Dixon and Pakali had made careful preparations for a dinner to which Hattakowa had invited General Chillingsworth and Philip Marchand, two strangers in Wauchula. The recent abrogation of the mineral leases in the Territory had caused many complications, which General Chillingsworth, as an inspector for the Department of the Interior, had been sent to adjust.

Marchand was a young Kentuckian who had come to the Territory to work with the Dawes Commission. When the two guests arrived at the Dixon cottage, Pakali, after greeting the white-haired old army officer, looked up to meet a pair of quizzical grey eyes that plainly spoke something of the surprise and admiration their owner felt. The stranger was not at all like the white man who had come to the Nation five years before, yet Pakali was conscious of a sudden pang of memory. Arnold Stuart had been tall and fair; this man was of medium height and his hair was brown. Arnold had shown an easy confidence of manner; Marchand bowed with a courtesy that had in it a touch of reverence.

Beaumont had been expected from Moma Binna and he arrived as Mrs. Dixon was placing her guests at the table. The conversation soon became interesting. In his own house Hattakowa was the irreproachable host, for his boasted adherence to primitive ways gave him a simplicity of manner that put everyone at ease. General Chillingsworth, who was a courtly old man, immediately made friends with Hattakowa and Beaumont.

No one knew better than Beaumont the history of every-

thing pertaining to the Five Nations, and, under skilful cross examination, he gave an entertaining account of the efforts of an asphalt company to obtain control of promising land. Marchand, who manifested an interest in the matters under discussion because all that pertained to life was significant to him, showed that he had made good use of a few days' sojourn in Muscogee by accumulating much information. He had been seated next to Pakali, and he secretly rejoiced in what he called his luck. Her evening dress of some thin black material revealed her distinctive beauty. He noticed the long curve of her neck, the rounded outline of her chin, and the fine modelling of her head. When she smiled, with her long-lashed eyelids shading the light of a spirit that lured him with its mystery of blended races, he was fascinated.

The incense of Marchand's admiration was exhilarating to Pakali, who was too natural a woman not to enjoy the young Kentuckian's flattering tribute. Marchand found life worth while, and there was something in his boyish personality that brought back her youth. She had thought that association with Hattakowa had recalled her girlhood, but there was always between them the memory of the five years of her womanhood; the consciousness that she had eaten of the tree of knowledge could not be banished. With Marchand she could confine herself to the present.

The curtains had been drawn and the lamps lighted because the dusk came suddenly, when the mulatto girl, who was waiting upon the table, whispered to Mrs. Dixon that the cook was so much scared the biscuits had been allowed to burn. " She says a cyclone's comin'," the servant announced in a tone that arrested the attention of everyone at the table.

" You darkies are always expecting cyclones," said Hattakowa. " I suppose smoke is coming out of the stack of the cotton compress and Aunt Polly thinks she sees a funnel-shaped cloud."

Hattakowa took the precaution to pull aside the curtains

in the bay window. What he saw caused him to look serious. The sky was heavy and the air had become oppressive. Clouds of a peculiar greenish tinge had been drawn together into a twisted pillar that appeared to reach to the earth. Not a breath of air was stirring and the ominous quiet foretold an impending storm.

"It does look as if we might have a high wind," Hattakowa said.

"I hope you are not going to entertain me with a cyclone," General Chillingsworth answered, as the little party rose from the table. "I have been through all sorts of experiences in my life but, so far, cyclones have not been among them."

"Indian Territory has seldom suffered from cyclones. Oklahoma is more unfortunate," Beaumont declared, reassuringly.

"We have had enough narrow escapes from destruction here in the Chickasaw Nation to encourage the general ownership of cyclone cellars," Mrs. Dixon asserted, "and I can predict that we shall find it advisable to spend the evening where we shall be out of harm's reach."

Without delay she began to give instructions to the negro man servant, whom she had summoned. The silver was hastily put into a basket and a few valuables were gathered into bags, Pakali and Marchand helping with the preparations, while Hattakowa went to the stables to look after his horses, for the neighing of the frightened animals had given added warning of approaching danger.

Within a quarter of an hour a high wind was blowing. Miko, who had run in from the cook house, stood in a doorway whence he looked with interest upon a scene of activity which promised entertainment.

Without waiting to perform the duties assigned to them the servants, excepting Mammy 'Liza, fled to the end of the garden where the smaller of the two cyclone cellars had been

assigned to them as their special place of refuge. Here a dozen negroes from the neighbourhood were already in possession.

The pillar of cloud deepened in colour and Beaumont declared it was time for the entire family to leave the cottage. The larger of the two cyclone cellars was but a few steps from the rear of the house. Its rounded top, a foot or two above the level of the ground, was covered with vines, which ran up the big air shaft that ventilated the subterranean room. On one slanting side, heavy doors opened upon strong iron hinges.

A terrific gust of wind caused a hasty retreat into the cellar. With Marchand's help Beaumont closed the big double doors after Mrs. Dixon, Pakali, and Miko had been assisted down the steep steps by General Chillingsworth. For a moment they were in darkness, but Mrs. Dixon soon lighted a lamp the glow of which revealed a comfortably furnished room of ample dimensions.

"This is a most extraordinary situation! Most extraordinary!" exclaimed General Chillingsworth, who was perspiring from his unusual exertions. He polished the top of his bald head with his handkerchief and looked about with a smile that had in it more or less apprehension. Marchand laughed at the dignified old man's perturbation, which was only half concealed beneath his efforts to appear at ease.

"We ought to appreciate our opportunities of getting acquainted with life in the Indian Territory," he said.

"This is the first time I have ever thought it worth while to seek protection in a cyclone cellar," Beaumont announced, with a loyal desire to defend his part of the country.

"We do not usually spend our evenings here," Pakali testified. "Father and I have teased Aunt Totopehah because she would have these two dugouts in her garden. There is not a cyclone cellar in Tishomingo."

Miko, pulling at her skirt, demanded attention.

"Where is the Man Looking for the Sun?" he asked.

"Hattakowa? Where is Hattakowa?" the child's mother cried, turning to Mrs. Dixon with a questioning look.

Hattakowa himself answered the question by opening one of the doors and hastily descending the steps. As he came in, the wind blew out the lamp.

"This is the worst storm we have ever had," said Hattakowa, after the lamp had been relighted. As he spoke, there was a distant roaring sound, terrible in its volume and import. The women looked into each other's pale faces and the men drew all the chairs into a small circle. Miko, climbing into his mother's lap, buried his face upon her bosom. With her arms around her child Pakali whispered to him not to be afraid, and even while she spoke there was a crash that shook the earth. For a few seconds everyone in the cyclone cellar was stunned. Hattakowa put one arm around his mother and the other across Miko as the child lay in Pakali's lap.

Neither Pakali nor Mrs. Dixon uttered a cry, for the Indian habit of self-control survived in them to such an extent that they were able to wait quietly for whatever might befall. General Chillingsworth and Marchand almost forgot their own peril as they watched the little group whose Chickasaw and Choctaw heredity had given them such splendid courage. Only a few seconds had elapsed from the time of the first roar of the storm to the final crash, but to those who listened it seemed that many moments had passed. Presently it was evident that the storm's fury had abated but for a long time the falling of trees was distinguishable. Then there was a downpour of rain that beat upon the closed doors with a noise that made conversation impossible. As soon as he could be heard, Beaumont began to speculate upon the probable extent of the cyclone.

"We have been touched by only the edge of the storm," he said.

"Well, if this is the edge I am glad I didn't get into the middle of it," General Chillingsworth asserted.

"Yes, the edge is all I want," averred Marchand.

"Do you suppose the cottage is gone?" asked Mrs. Dixon.

"As soon as it is possible to walk in the wind I shall go out to see what has happened," said Hattakowa. "I am afraid there will be plenty of work for strong men wherever the cyclone has wrecked buildings."

"We shall probably find plenty to do," Beaumont said.

"Of course I shall go with you," Marchand quietly remarked, and the old General announced that he would be one of the party.

More than an hour elapsed before Hattakowa found it possible to venture outside the cellar. It required all his strength to force open the slanting doors against which was piled a mass of broken timbers. He had taken the precaution to have a number of lanterns placed in the cellar, and, selecting one of these, he insisted upon going out alone while he made a short scouting trip. He returned in a few minutes to report that the cottage was safe and, bidding the three men to wait, he went away. Inside the cellar all tried to pass the time as comfortably as possible. Miko, who had fallen asleep, had been put to bed upon a cot, and while Pakali sat beside him Marchand talked with her.

"To-night seems like a dream," the young man said. "As a social venture an evening spent in a cyclone cellar has the charm of novelty, and more, it has given glimpses of character that no ordinary association could possibly present. You won't mind if I tell you that I think you and Mrs. Dixon are the bravest women I ever saw."

"There is not any reason why you should call us brave," Pakali answered. "We felt safe down here. Why, what did you expect us to do?"

"Oh, I don't know. Perhaps I hoped you would scream,

and, clinging to me, pray that I would save you. That's the way women do in novels and plays, you know."

Pakali smiled, and, with something of her old teasing spirit, said:

"In this case, even if I had given way to fright, of course I should not have needed to turn to you when my father was so near."

"Well, even though I have not had the chance to play the part of hero, I shall always feel that I have a special claim upon your friendship, because we have gone through a cyclone together. A cyclone certainly ought to be a tie between us."

"I should hardly call a cyclone a tie," said Pakali.

"You are right," admitted the young man. "Judging from the sound, the cyclone untied about everything in Wauchula."

Hattakowa did not come back until sunrise, and, during the long hours of his absence, Mrs. Dixon spoke but once or twice of the possibility that some accident might have befallen him. When he did return he found everyone wearied with the night vigil. General Chillingsworth and Beaumont had dozed in their chairs while Mrs. Dixon had pretended to take a nap. Pakali and Marchand had talked in low tones between long pauses when they sat near together, motionless and silent, lest they might disturb the older members of the party.

"Is there much loss of life?" Mrs. Dixon asked as Hattakowa removed his dripping outside coat.

"It is not possible to make anything like an estimate now," he answered, "but the next few hours will give us a chance to get at the facts."

"Why didn't you come back before?" Beaumont inquired almost angrily. "You know we were waiting to join a relief party."

"In the dark it was almost impossible to do anything,"

Hattakowa replied. "I thought it was best for you to save your strength. You men all come now."

He threw open both the cellar doors and the rush of fresh air revived the drowsy group.

"I must stop at the hotel to get the flask of whisky I smuggled into the Territory. It will be needed," said General Chillingsworth.

"Yes, there will be use for whisky," answered Hattakowa, "but you will not find your flask. The hotel is gone."

"The whole main street isn't wiped out, is it?" asked Beaumont.

"No, only part of it. The edge of the storm touched the negro quarter but the principal force of the wind was spent at the point where the hotel stood."

The three men waded through the mud and wet grass of the garden to the cottage, which was but slightly damaged, and Hattakowa went to the servants' cyclone cellar. Here the cook and housemaids were in a condition of fear bordering upon catalepsy, and the two men servants were still too much terrified to be available as assistants in any work that required courage. Mammy 'Liza alone appeared to be in a normal state of mind.

Having sternly ordered all the servants into the cook house to prepare breakfast for a large number of storm sufferers, Hattakowa conducted his mother and Pakali to the cottage. Tenderly he lifted Miko from the cot and the child was placed in his own little bed without being disturbed.

Every able-bodied man in Wauchula soon began to work upon the wrecked buildings. Beaumont wielded a pick with the strength of a young man; General Chillingsworth found employment in giving first aid to several injured men who were rescued from the hotel, and Marchand joined the searchers among the ruins. Hattakowa moved back and forth giving orders, for he was quick to see the necessity for

organisation. Those who had served with him in the Indian police corps readily obeyed his commands. A temporary hospital was prepared in one of the store buildings, and thither all the injured were carried. Twenty families had been made homeless by the storm. Wreckage was scattered over a wide area. In the dismal grey of the rainy morning the scene was one of peculiar desolation. All that remained of the pretentious Palace Hotel was a small pile of bricks in one corner.

As Hattakowa passed the ruin he thought he heard a groan. Taking Beaumont's pick he carefully dug in the debris. Buried under broken furniture and shattered glass he found a middle-aged man, frightfully crushed. No one recognised the face of the storm victim. The man died while he was being carried to the temporary hospital. The body was identified by Billy Brown, the Wauchula banker, who had been inquiring everywhere for a Kansas acquaintance that he had left at the hotel the night before.

Brown was a man who had reached a self-satisfied middle age. His heavy face had once been handsome in its coarse outlines, but the marks of dissipation had disfigured it. His cheeks were flabby, and beneath his eyes the skin puffed out. He had a dark moustache which he twisted every now and then with a right hand upon which flashed a large diamond. He was despised by the better class of the Indians in the Chickasaw Nation. It was a matter of common knowledge that he had made his fortune in fattening and selling the lean cattle and hogs shipped from the south, and had moved into the Territory from Kansas because of the dispute over the ownership of a certain herd of Texas shorthorns.

Brown's manner at the time he identified the dead man aroused Hattakowa's suspicion.

" He had some valuable papers," Brown said, in an anxious voice. " Has anyone found a valise marked ' J. L.'? "

" We are trying to save lives, not baggage, just now,"

Hattakowa remarked, with a contemptuous glance at the man who could think of valuables at a time when men, women and children might be suffering.

"The papers were public documents," Brown made haste to explain. "Their loss will affect many persons."

"There is nothing to hinder you from looking for them," Hattakowa said as he moved away; "but you might find them more quickly if you lent a hand in the rescue work."

Brown gave him an ugly look, but afterward many persons remembered that the banker had spent most of that day of disaster near the ruins of the hotel.

The storm had played queer pranks, but it had killed no one excepting the stranger from Kansas. A baby, wrapped safe and warm in blankets, was found unhurt in a spruce tree several blocks from the place where its parents' house had stood.

Among all the narrow escapes none was more marvellous than that of Judge and Mrs. Maury. Their cottage was outside the path of the storm, but the strong wind took it off the high timber supports which served in place of stone foundations in most of the Territory buildings. Ogden Maury, who lived next door to his father in a house of ambitious architecture, saved his family by the most heroic efforts. A melodeon belonging to the Free Methodist church was blown through the front of his house and found its way to the kitchen, where it upset a lamp. By sacrificing a velvet rug the young man smothered the fire before the burning oil had chance to do much damage.

Hattakowa had sent all the Maurys to his mother's home. Here breakfast was served near midday to a weary and dishevelled party.

"Considering that this is a prohibition Territory it is miraculous how much good whisky was found this morning," said Judge Maury, after he had drunk two cups of strong coffee which cleared his rather hazy vision. Mrs. Maury,

who still wore her pompadour in curl papers, although she had taken time to put on an elaborate old-fashioned dressing sack, looked at her husband in mild reproach.

"Dad had a right to drink all he could to-day," said Ogden Maury, who was holding one of his children upon his lap.

"A public calamity always brings out some queer phases of human nature," said Beaumont. "I noticed that every man passed around his flask as naturally as if he were not aware he was breaking the prohibition law, which is supposed to prevent the Indians from becoming drunkards."

"Public calamities always show how closely comedy and tragedy are associated," commented General Chillingsworth.

"That is true," agreed Hattakowa from the foot of the long table. "Our friend, Ogden Maury, has always complained that the Free Methodist melodeon was too near his house, and the cyclone has moved it to a position that will enable him to realise how wrong it was for him to be dissatisfied with its original location."

"In the same way Mrs. Maury and I have been taught a lesson," said the Judge. "We have never liked these Territory houses that are set up on stilts, and we have often found fault with our cottage, but this morning we agreed that we liked it much better when it was on stilts than when it wasn't."

"Oh, we are in such a dreadful state!" moaned Mrs. Maury, lifting her hands, "and, think of it! My cut glass goblets that have been in the family for three generations were smashed into bits!"

Pakali, who had been helping her aunt superintend the serving of breakfast to negro victims of the storm, came in accompanied by Miko. The excitement of the day had put a deep colour into her cheeks, and her sense of gratitude because the lives of her relatives and friends had been spared

had given her something of her old buoyancy of spirit. She passed around the table, shaking hands with the twenty persons whom her aunt and Hattakowa were entertaining. Marchand offered her his seat and accepted a chair near the foot of the table, but, while he talked to the person next him, his attention often wandered to Pakali, who had much to say to the old General.

Conversation was interrupted presently by a quarrel between Reginald Maury and Miko over a coveted position on Judge Maury's knee, where a critical examination of the Confederate button, worn on the lapel of the Judge's frock coat, and the gold-faced watch carried in the Judge's broadcloth trousers, offered entertainment.

"Miko is the Judge's little Indian boy," said Pakali's son with an arrogant wave of his small hand.

"No, no," contended Reginald. "*I* am his Indian boy."

Miko looked at Ogden Maury with some contempt in his face.

"Your father isn't an Indian," insisted Miko.

"You haven't any father," replied Reginald.

A silence fell upon all who heard the children's quarrel. Virginia rushed to her son and forcibly removed the child from the room. Miko stood by the Judge's chair, his eyes seeking his mother with a questioning look. There was amazement in his expression.

"Come to me, Little Chieftain," said Hattakowa, softly.

Miko lifted his head proudly. For the first time in his life had come to him a question concerning the father whom he had never missed.

Some of the guests recovered their self-possession enough to make a few casual remarks, but the high treble of Miko's voice was heard above the forced conversation.

"Haven't I any father?" Miko asked. "Tell me, Man Looking for the Sun."

In an agony of pain Pakali clasped her hands under the table while she waited for the answer.

" Yes, Little Chieftain, you have a father, and a grandfather, and The Man Looking for the Sun," Hattakowa said, drawing the boy to him, and then whispering: " Miko must wait until some other day before asking questions."

CHAPTER XVIII

BLIKENS MAKES A BARGAIN

THE loss of the papers on the night of the cyclone had given Billy Brown such evident concern that Beaumont thought it worth while to ask frequently whether they had been recovered. Beyond the mere mention of the name of the man who had been killed, Brown vouchsafed little information to the coroner's jury, and by the time the persons injured in the storm had recovered, interest in the identity of the stranger had vanished.

Brown did not give up search for the lost papers. If he could have been sure that they were not preserved somewhere in the dead man's valise he would have worried little, because the rains would have made the documents illegible. For weeks after the cyclone lost articles were found in places far removed from Wauchula. A trunk that had been stored in the hotel was brought in from a dry creek bed a mile from the town, and the day it was found Brown drove to the place, which he examined with minute care. But, although he watched every foot of the road out and back, he did not find the papers.

On the day after the search he was sitting in his private office behind the brass grating that guarded the bank employes from the public. He had transacted a profitable two hours' business, for he had advanced money upon the cotton crops of three plantations worked by shiftless whites, who were reasonably certain of losing their year's product for the trifling amount the banker had lent. Still, he was out of humour, inasmuch as he had a suspicion that Beaumont or some of the other Indians might guess the value of the lost

documents. Brown feared Beaumont, for whose wealth he had a profound respect. The Chickasaw declined to permit Brown to make any overtures toward an acquaintance, so that it was impossible for the banker to judge Beaumont's shrewdness and intelligence. He had seen enough of Sands to realise that the former governor was a foe to be feared.

Brown's reflections were disturbed by the announcement that Gee-Haw Blikens wanted to see him. The newcomer was admitted and he greeted Brown with an easy "Howdy."

Gee-Haw Blikens was a tall, round-shouldered man of about fifty. He wore canvas trousers that were tucked in a pair of cowhide boots, and his blue gingham shirt contrasted with a pair of broken red suspenders. Blikens boasted of the fact that he had not worn a coat more than half a dozen times since he came to the Territory. He had a straggly, grey beard that partly concealed the loss of most of his teeth, and his long, thin hair fell over his shirt band. A soiled, water-stained, old grey hat with a drooping brim rested upon his ears. His large nose was red from the combined effects of sunburn and a certain brand of bitters that the drug stores sold in large quantities to persons who desired a substitute for intoxicants.

"Well, Blikens, I did not expect to see you so soon," said Brown, motioning to a chair. "What can I do for you to-day?"

"As usual, I'm in need of money," was the reply. Gee-Haw Blikens took from his hip pocket a piece of tobacco. He bit off a generous chew after Brown had declined to try what was recommended as the best plug on the market.

"Have you spent all you borrowed last time?" Brown swung himself round in his revolving chair and cast a contemptuous look upon his visitor.

"A man with twelve chilluns has to spend money," Gee-Haw made this statement in a whining voice. "It do seem

as if luck was agin me," he proceeded. "My biggest boy broke our new plough; the red calf died last week; an' the cotton ain't doin' well nohow."

"Then how can you expect me to let you have another dollar?" The banker swung himself back to his desk.

"I kin expect it 'cause I'll be the best-fixed squaw man in the Territory after the allotment." Gee-Haw put a grimy hand upon the arm of the banker's chair and threw back his thin shoulders so that the part of his red suspender that remained in service was made taut.

"You've had about all you can get from me," declared Brown.

"What's eight hundad dollars on a claim agin thousands of acahs of lan'?" This question was put with a twang of disdain.

"You're not going to get as much land as you think."

"Oh, ain't I!" Blikens winked one watery eye.

"No, you're not. The Chickasaws may not have more than five hundred acres apiece."

"Twelve times five hundad, jes' foh the young uns, ain't bad," averred Gee-Haw.

"You can't talk to me to-day," said the banker, in a tone of dismissal.

"I knowed you'd be mad 'cause Jimmy was drownded an' I'll have to lose one allotment." Gee-Haw wiped his face upon his shirt sleeve. "Jimmy allus was a cahless boy. His ma and me couldn't make him undahstand that he might be wuth about eight hundad acahs o' lan'. He wouldn't pay no attention. He had some o' the blamedest escapes you evah see. It did seem jest as if he was bent on losin' me his shah o' the lan' allotment, and sho' nuf he did."

"We have discussed that before, Blikens," Brown reminded his visitor. "The boy's dead and that's all there is of it."

"P'r'aps 'tis," assented Gee-Haw, "but that don't inta-

feah with my gettin' you to put up a few dollahs on the new young un."

"Have you another baby at your house?"

"No, not 'zactly, but we'ah lookin' fo' one soon, an' so I've come to ask you fo' a hundad dollahs."

Brown, who ordinarily did not have a highly developed sense of humour, looked serious for a few moments. He took up his pen and began to write an agreement. Then the unusual character of the transaction became apparent to him.

"How am I going to make out a claim?" he inquired. "What name can I use?"

Blikens scratched his head, reflectively. In a moment his face lighted with a toothless smile:

"We'll call him Billy Brown Blikens," he said. "I'll name him aftah you."

The banker flinched at this rather dubious honour. He thought for a moment.

"Suppose Billy Brown Blikens shouldn't happen to be the right name?" he suggested.

"Couldn't we change the name to Tilly Brown then?" Blikens looked cast down as he made this inquiry.

"Of course not," Brown answered. "I don't know as the claim would be valid anyway. I think I'd better not make the loan."

"Wall, s'pose I say we'll call huh Billy even if the name don't suit," said Blikens, "and we can fix the date all right. I'd jest have to swah to it, and I can swah to 'most anything."

"I'll let you have the money on condition you keep me informed on what the Indians are doing," Brown promised. "Report to me whatever happens, no matter whether the news you bring seems important or not. I've told you to keep your eyes and ears open so that you will know if anyone finds those lost papers."

"Them papahs must be mighty valyble," commented Gee-

Haw with a shrewd expression on his face. " I'm tolahbly sahtain you'll heah from 'em some time."

" Well, can I depend upon you to act as a sort of detective among the Indians? " Brown asked, impatiently.

" You kin count on me, but I can't promise to be much he'p." Gee-Haw spoke with some reluctance as he rose to go. " Bein' a galvanised citizen I ain't trusted as much as I might be. Them Indians is mighty shy of a squaw man."

As Blikens drove homeward that day he pondered over his financial affairs, which were always in a tangle. He was too lazy and too shiftless to conduct his farming according to any practical system. He had purchased various pieces of machinery to aid him in the cultivation of the fertile acres that he held tentatively, but as, for several years he had been " layin' out " to build a barn, and had never gotten around to it, the heavy rainstorms of the spring had rendered his investments practically useless.

Mrs. Blikens was not what would be called a good manager. Her mother had been a poor white from South Carolina and her father a Chickasaw. But, even if she had been versed in all the arts of domestic science, the care of her rapidly increasing family would have made it difficult for her to devote time to dairy work or poultry raising, both of which assured a small income for the wives of the farmers. Ever since Gee-Haw, who never took any thought for the morrow, had been able to borrow money from Brown, the members of the Blikens family had enjoyed a period of such unusual opulence that the suspicions of their neighbours had been aroused. It was suspected that some way had been found to turn the anticipations connected with the apportionment into cash.

Brown had not been generous in his dealings with Gee-Haw. As he thought over his transactions with the banker, the squaw man, who sat humped up on the seat of his rickety wagon, spat reflectively over the rattling front wheel and

slapped one line, which was spliced with a bit of rope, against the back of the nigh horse. The rough-coated buckskin team broke into a trot that jarred all Gee-Haw's serious thoughts out of his head. For half a mile he travelled toward his ranch, the money in the pocket of his worn trousers giving him a sense of such comfortable satisfaction that he felt it not worth while to wonder what he should do when the last cent had been used.

A turn in the road brought Gee-Haw and his team to a log bridge over a shrunken creek. At the right were well-worn ruts which showed where horsemen and teamsters stopped to water their tired animals. Gee-Haw's natural inclination to do everything the wrong way caused him to turn to the left instead of the right, thus compelling the buckskin team to drag the wagon over some big stones and several obstructing masses of driftwood. In the last pile of driftwood the wagon wheels sunk so unevenly that Gee-Haw was compelled to get down from his high seat in order to avoid being upset. Addressing his horses with a string of oaths he led them to the water's edge, and while they drank waited with the patience that distinguishes a lazy man.

In the places where the wheels had broken through the driftwood Gee-Haw noticed some pieces of clothing. With the end of his blacksnake whip he pulled out an old coat. The garment was much better than the only one the squaw man possessed and he examined it with interest. A large leather letter case in one of the pockets attracted his attention. Naturally his first thought was that he might have found some money, but in this hope he was disappointed, for he discovered several folded sheets of legal cap paper covered with typewriting. Gee-Haw prided himself upon the fact that he had never needed an education. Reading was a difficult task to him and he put the letter case into his hip pocket, without gaining any idea of the contents of the

papers. He threw the coat into the wagon because he knew it would be useful when made over for some of his numerous progeny. It was not until he had jogged along five of the remaining seven miles to his ranch that it occurred to him that he might have found the lost documents about which Brown was so much concerned. The idea that he might be able to convert what he had found into money made him feel extravagant, therefore he drank half the bottle of bitters he had bought, and when he reached home he was in a cheerful state of mind.

Gee-Haw's exhilaration lasted but a short time, because at the door of the tumble-down shack, which he called home, Mrs. Blikens met him with the news that two of the children had slow fever while one of them was suffering from a "rising" in her neck. Illness was not common in the Blikens family and the thought flashed through Gee-Haw's mind that it was possible for death to rob him of several more allotments of land. He hung the coat he had found upon a nail outside the house and kept the letter case in his pocket. Although he went to Wauchula the next day to summon a physician, he did not tell Brown about the papers.

Gee-Haw was mercenary but, at the same time, he had a rudimentary affection for his offspring. When it became apparent that two of the children were dangerously ill, and when the disease, which was diagnosed as diphtheria, spread to five of the little ones, he was really distressed. Within a week four of his children died and Gee-Haw had to use the one hundred dollars he had borrowed from Brown in part payment of the funeral expenses.

The week after the Blikens children died Gee-Haw was working in a cotton field that gave little promise of a good crop, when a horseman and a horsewoman called to him from the road. With his usual deliberation the squaw man walked leisurely to the place where Hattakowa and Pakali waited for him.

"We rode out to ask about your children," said Pakali. "I could not go to your house for fear of carrying the disease to my little son, but I am sure that you will let us help you if we can."

"Nobody kin do nothin' much foh us now, I reckon," answered Gee-Haw, as he chewed a blade of grass.

"There's a job on my ranch that will pay you well if you can leave your own place." Hattakowa volunteered assistance in a tone of such frank sympathy that the squaw man, who had always felt the Indian's antipathy, could not conceal his surprise.

"'Peahs to me my troubles make you fuhgit I am one o' them pussons you Indians don't like," he remarked.

"I remember that your wife is a Chickasaw," Hattakowa replied, with some severity. "It occurred to me that you might need ready money and I was not on terms friendly enough to permit of an offer to lend you what you want."

Gee-Haw threw away what was left of the blade of grass and, after taking time to weigh his chances of making capital out of his recent bereavement, he remarked:

"I can't say as I'm too proud to borrah money when I need it. Fact is, I'd ruthah borrah it than wo'k foh it. I'm pahtic'lahly glad when I kin git it from an enemy 'cause then I don't have no regrets when I can't pay it back." The squaw man put both hands into his ragged pockets and laughed as if he had made a delicate jest.

"I shall be glad to lend you some money," said Hattakowa, who knew that he would profit nothing from Gee-Haw's labours upon his ranch.

"And I want to send a negro woman out to help Mrs. Blikens," said Pakali, turning her horse's head toward home in order that she might not see the financial transaction between Hattakowa and Gee-Haw.

A few minutes later, as Gee-Haw's visitors were starting back to Wauchula, the squaw man, who had tied the money

he had received into the corner of a red bandana handkerchief, bethought himself of the letter case which he still carried in the hip pocket of his only pair of trousers.

"Mistah Dixon, I found some papahs the othah day I'd like to show yo' if you've got time to look at 'em," he announced in an unconcerned way. "I'm not much of a scholah and it's easiah fo' me to have you tell me what they ah." He handed the leather case to Hattakowa, who glanced over the papers and instantly saw that they were of more than passing interest.

"Will you let me take these papers with me?" he asked. "I want to examine them carefully, and I will return them to you to-morrow."

A shrewd expression came into Gee-Haw's eyes as he replied:

"Them papahs might be the ve'y ones that Billy Brown, the bankah, wants to find. They ah wuth money to me, and I ain't goin' to let 'em out o' my sight."

"They may be worth money to me," returned Hattakowa with a careless laugh that concealed his eagerness to retain possession of the documents. "I'll give you twenty-five dollars if you will lend them to me over night."

"Wall, that's a bahgain if the lady will add heh promise to youall's that them papahs come back to-morrow." Gee-Haw gave his consent with an assumption of importance that brought a smile to Pakali's lips, but she readily agreed to see that the leather envelope was sent back to the Blikens ranch.

"Do you think it's exactly right for you to read those papers if they are Mr. Brown's?" Pakali inquired as she and Hattakowa were on their way home.

"All is fair in war, and I intend to have these papers copied after I have shown them to your father and Governor Sands," Hattakowa answered. "They contain absolute proof that Brown is interested in a syndicate that has planned

to get possession of a large part of the Chickasaw and Choctaw lands. I was sure he was helping to bring in the carloads of claimants from Kansas, but now he has even a more ambitious land-grabbing scheme than the one we have been watching and fighting since the Curtis bill became a law."

Hattakowa set his lips firmly, and a look of stern determination came into his strong face. " From this day on I mean to play a part in Chickasaw politics."

" I am glad to hear you make such a declaration," Pakali answered. " Father says you have been too passive and we have both wondered that you, who feel so intensely the wrongs of our Nation, should take so little part in the battle for our rights."

" Perhaps my negligence has been due to my Indian fatalism," suggested Hattakowa.

For a mile or two they rode on in silence. The clear morning brought to them a sense of exhilaration, for it was yet too early for the heat to be oppressive. Overhead the sky had the transparent blue that gives a luminous quality to all that pertains to the earth. There was light in the shining leaves of the trees. The white of the earliest of the bursting cotton bolls shone as if the nodding stalks held tiny lamps. Pakali rode Ossilusa, the horse that Hattakowa had given her on her wedding day. At Moma Binna this animal had been her daily companion and at Hattakowa's suggestion she had recently had him brought to Wauchula. Ossilusa was as sensitive to the influence of nature as Pakali herself, and now, when a cooling breeze that had travelled all the way from the Gulf of Mexico swept over the green fields and moved the tops of the high trees, the horse, feeling the mane stirred upon his neck, arched his handsome head and broke into a brisk canter. At a narrow ford, where the creek was almost dry, the two riders stopped.

" When I come away from people, I am at ease with the world," Hattakowa said. " The earth takes away from me

all the fret and the fever that I feel when I go among men and women."

"I am happiest when out of doors," answered Pakali, "but because I am not so much of an Indian as you I often long for companionship."

"The spirit of the forest does not satisfy all my needs of companionship." Hattakowa spoke slowly as he leaned over his horse's head to adjust the bridle, "but I would have just one person in all the world for my comrade—and more than comrade. There is no man so strong that he can always stifle in his heart the call for his Star Woman."

Pakali looked away toward the horizon line. Presently she made answer:

"I know. Even though I have Miko I find the way lonely. I came to Wauchula with the hope that I might forget that love has touched me and passed me by."

"The great love has not passed you by, Pakali. Through life and death it will be with you."

Hattakowa spoke as one who baldly states a truth. There, in the morning light, the world was revealed to them as a reality. Because both the man and the woman lived much in the dream world they spoke of the sacred things naturally. Looking into each other's eyes for a moment they read the truth as they must read it in each other's soul. Both knew that as they travelled on through the years their meetings must be always at the partings of the ways.

Slowly Ossilusa crossed the ford. He walked through a strip of timber land, letting Hattakowa's mount speed far ahead of him.

CHAPTER XIX

THE CANDIDATE FOR GOVERNOR

HATTAKOWA took the papers Gee-Haw Blikens had found to Judge Maury, whose legal opinion was desirable in view of the character of the documents which pertained to a syndicate for the wholesale importation of Mississippi Chickasaws and Choctaws. When the Chickasaws had been transferred to Indian Territory a comparatively small number of the Nation remained in the State. Contact with illiterate whites and environment that was conducive to retrogression had left this remnant of the tribe in a pitiable condition of poverty and ignorance.

According to the terms of the agreement entered into by the men interested in the syndicate, parties of from fifty to two hundred Mississippi Chickasaws and Choctaws were to be brought into the Territory from time to time and registered upon the citizenship rolls. In consideration of the sum of one hundred dollars a year and a meagre equipment of farm implements, each family was to turn over to the syndicate half the land allotted to it. Provisions were made for the future purchase of the remaining homestead at prices that were merely nominal. The syndicate represented a capital of fifty thousand dollars. Elisha Fordham, the former congressman, was at the head of it, and Billy Brown's name appeared in the list of directors. It was evident that the man who was killed in the cyclone had been merely an agent.

By a piece of good luck Beaumont and Sands happened to be in Wauchula so that Hattakowa was able to take them with him to Judge Maury's office, where the final examination of the papers was made.

"Can't something be done to stop this double robbery?" asked Sands, as he leaned back in one of the dilapidated arm-chairs in the lawyer's office. "This scheme enables the tribe of landgrabbers to reduce the per capita allotment among the the Chickasaws of the Territory, while it takes from the poor Mississippi Indians whatever property they may be able to secure."

Judge Maury paced up and down the strip of frayed oil cloth extending across his office floor. Now and then he pulled his goatee reflectively. The trousers of his worn broadcloth suit were supplemented by a pair of light grey gaiters that somehow fixed the attention of the three Indians who waited anxiously for the Judge's advice.

"Attorney See-My-Fee, about whom Governor Sands so often talks, has been shrewd enough to protect the syndicate," Judge Maury said. "If the United States Government chooses to recognise these Mississippi Chickasaws and Choctaws we can do nothing."

"Such injustice stirs all my savage instincts!" exclaimed Hattakowa. "According to our tribal laws the Indians who would not come to the new country have no right to inherit the land that has been ours for half a century."

"That is true, that is true," assented Judge Maury, emphasising his words with a tap of one of his gaitered feet. "In this case you must rely upon unity of purpose among the Chickasaws who belong to the Territory. You can make your protest heard in Washington, and for future use I advise you not to neglect having copies of these papers made."

"It is impossible to count upon united action by the people of the Chickasaw Nation," Sands declared, shaking his head. "Factional differences are being multiplied daily. The so-called Progressive party is growing so that it is likely to carry our next election."

"If you will run for office again we will beat the Cole Mattison crowd," Beaumont prophesied.

But Sands' rugged face took on a look of determination as he answered:

" I am not the man to win. I have made too many enemies in the past and I am too old to control the younger element." He hesitated for a moment, then he said: " I have thought that Hattakowa is the man to lead our party."

There was a look of astonishment on Hattakowa's face as he answered in a nettled tone:

" The Man Looking for the Sun is not the man hunting for office. Governor, this is hardly a time for you to jest."

" I am quite serious," replied Sands. " You have friends in all classes of the Indians. Chickasaws of every degree and mixedbloods would vote for you. If you are really sincere in all your boasted loyalty to the old order of things you can show it by using your time, and—I regret to admit that it is necessary—money in the coming campaign."

Beaumont, who had been listening with much interest, commented:

" It does not seem possible that Hattakowa is old enough to run for governor, but now that I count the years I know he has lived through thirty."

" There isn't any reason why Mr. Dixon should not devote himself to politics," commented Judge Maury. " You cannot prevent your people from suffering terrible wrongs, but you can help to diminish those wrongs, and you can retard the speed with which the Progressive party achieves its ends."

Hattakowa walked to the window where he stood looking out upon the little town.

" I had meant to work with all my strength for the candidate of our party," he said. " Never for one moment have I been so presumptuous as to think of myself as the leader."

" Well, begin to think now," admonished Sands. " The Nation needs the help of the young men who have been educated so that they are able to defend their people from the white man."

Before the consultation with Judge Maury was ended the delicate question whether it would be best to notify Brown that his papers had been read was discussed at length, and it was finally decided to return the documents to Gee-Haw Blikens without making any comment upon them. Thus the matter would be left altogether to the squaw man, who could do as he saw fit about informing Brown that the Indians were aware of the syndicate scheme.

" Since I am a fatalist I am sure it is best not to interfere with what chance will do," Hattakowa remarked with a smile. " If Brown finds out that I have had his lost documents, I shall have a chance to declare that I shall work against him; if not, our secret knowledge may avail much at some future time."

Within a few days Hattakowa had been persuaded to be a candidate for the office of governor and there followed weeks of unremitting work for Beaumont and Sands as well as for the younger Indians. Meanwhile Pakali still remained at the white cottage, inasmuch as Moma Binna was turned into political headquarters for Hattakowa's supporters. John Oaktree undertook to canvass part of Pontotoc County where Samuel Jenkins, the fullblood who had been chosen as the tool of the Progressive party, was strongest. As an opponent to Hattakowa, Jenkins was weak, inasmuch as he had but a small personal following. With the two Mattisons and Billy Brown to manage his campaign for him, however, he developed possibilities that made his victory not improbable. The Wauchula *Wampum,* which, despite its name, was anti-Indian on every subject, became bitter in its abuse of Hattakowa, whom it termed the young Croesus of the Chickasaws.

Wauchula and Ardmore were so distinctly white men's cities that the Indian elections had but slight interest for any residents excepting those who were identified with enterprises depending upon the speedy disintegration of the tribal government.

In the midst of the campaign Philip Marchand passed three days that were not without their disappointment. It was the young man's desire to devote most of his time to Pakali. He did not stop to analyse her charm for him, or to consider that she was married. She was to him a beautiful woman who piqued his interest, and who satisfied his craving for companionship. In Muscogee he had met many pretty girls, but he was not a squire of dames and he found society in the capital of the Creek Nation tiresome. Pakali was to him the ideal of the civilised Indian woman. Her personality, elusive, baffling, appealed to the poetic side of his nature. As he travelled to Wauchula he had planned whole hours alone with her, but after his arrival he discovered that he would be compelled to share Pakali's society with several other persons.

The Territory had too much of the frontier spirit to admit of any freedom for married persons who represented the best social life, and Pakali took care that she should not be alone with Marchand. The evening of his arrival Mrs. Dixon invited him to supper, but callers prevented him from monopolising Pakali. The next two days brought many baffling, tantalising situations to him, but they served to make him feel more than previously the delight of association with the Chickasaw woman.

When he was going away from Wauchula he asked Pakali if he might travel to Tishomingo to see her, and she answered:

"Come as my father's guest. Moma Binna is a lodge for all."

CHAPTER XX

MARCHAND MAKES A VISIT

HATTAKOWA'S campaign for the office of governor of the Chickasaw Nation proved to be the most exciting in the history of the Territory. John Oaktree and his sons worked in the county of Pontotoc; Beaumont confined his efforts to Tishomingo County; while Sands canvassed Panola and Pickens. It was the custom to elect immediately after a nomination, therefore Hattakowa had to depend upon his chances of winning general approval from the electors. He had always been a favourite, especially among the younger Indians, and, as boys of nineteen were qualified to exercise the right of suffrage, he had an enthusiastic following wherever there were youthful voters.

The Progressive party, which had chosen Samuel Jenkins as its candidate, made use of the white man's methods, and a large amount of money was distributed among ignorant fullbloods who would naturally cling to the old order of things. As one of the army of white men who dwelt as tenants in the Territory, Billy Brown had no right to interfere in the Indian election, but it was evident that he was aiding Gee-Haw Blikens and the squaw men in their efforts to insure victory for Jenkins. The two Mattisons became bitter opponents of Hattakowa and there was an open rupture between them and Ogden Maury.

On the day of the election Pakali waited for the returns with much anxiety. The early autumn had come and Moma Binna was enveloped in a golden haze. From the veranda Pakali frequently gazed toward the capitol, where the Judge and his clerks were recording the votes of Tishomingo

County. Since long before daylight her father had been driving among the ranches outside the town and a number of wagons had been sent out to bring in lazy and infirm voters. After Pakali had seen to the preparations for many chance dinner guests, she found the hours long and tedious. She could not read or settle herself to any of her usual tasks. She was, therefore, glad to see a horseman coming up the road, and, when he was near enough to be recognised, she smiled a cordial welcome to Philip Marchand. The young man had made excuses to write her occasional notes by sending to Moma Binna souvenirs that he picked up in various trips among the Creeks and mixedbloods who still lived in savage freedom far from Muscogee and the other towns.

"It does not seem possible that I am at last in Tishomingo!" exclaimed Marchand, as he jumped from the saddle. He held Pakali's hand several seconds longer than was necessary. "So many weeks have gone by since I saw you in Wauchula that I was almost afraid you had forgotten me."

Pakali laughingly assured him that she must always remember a cyclone companion, and, sending his horse to the stables, she conducted him to the veranda.

Although the frost time had not yet come, some of the leaves of the woodbine that wound about one of the veranda pillars had begun to change colour, and a creeping rose flaunted crimson blossoms above the porch railing. When Pakali had seated herself in a basket chair the young man saw that the background of flowers and shrubbery brought out the peculiar beauty of the Indian woman. Looking beyond her at the mountains, he said:

"Moma Binna is even more picturesque than it seemed in my dreams." He paused, and, with something like a blush on his handsome face, continued: "You see I am frank to admit that I dream of Moma Binna, which is only another way of saying that I have thought of you a great deal."

"So you have been wasting your time?" Pakali answered, jestingly, and, with a piquant assumption of superior age, she admonished: "You should keep your mind upon the duties the Dawes Commission assigns to you."

Quickly responding to her conversational cue Marchand pleaded:

"Be lenient in judging me, O Chickasaw lady. The Dawes Comission counts its clerks by the hundreds because politicians at Washington have debts to pay; so there is little for each man to do. But, since I first beheld Tishomingo an hour ago, I have made a resolution to work hard and to demand a great reward."

Pakali cast a questioning glance at him.

"When they begin to apportion the Chickasaw lands I shall ask to be assigned to Tishomingo."

"You will be tired of the Territory long before the Chickasaw allotment is reached," Pakali predicted, and then she rose quickly, for Hattakowa was coming toward the house. He wore his riding clothes and his dress showed traces of long travel on dusty roads.

"How is the election going?" Marchand asked, after Pakali had told the candidate for governor that he looked tired, and that he must have some coffee.

"They say that I shall beat Jenkins if there is not too much fraud in Pickens and Pontotoc Counties. You know Indians are natural politicians," Hattakowa went on.

A servant placed a coffee tray upon a small table. Pakali poured a stimulating draught, and, as Hattakowa reached out his hand for the cup, she noticed that he wore the ruby ring.

"Hattakowa, I have not seen the ruby on your hand for many years!" she exclaimed. "Why do you wear it today?"

He looked at her with such meaning that she waited apprehensively lest he might speak with an embarrassing truth-

fulness that would reveal to Marchand a hint of her kinsman's devotion to her.

"There is a saying, 'Unlucky in love, lucky in war,'" said Hattakowa. "I put on the ring because I was going into combat."

"I hope it will be a true talisman," answered Pakali.

Marchand gazed at the ring for a moment, and, seeing its rare value, remarked:

"A man might be almost willing to challenge fortune in love for the privilege of owning such a gem as that."

Hattakowa shook his head.

"No, whenever I would have far-off cousin kind to me, I hide the ring," he declared.

Pakali rose hastily, and, in her nervousness, upset a little cream pitcher. Marchand proffered assistance in righting the tray, but Pakali made excuse that she must summon a servant, and went into the house.

Marchand covertly studied Hattakowa's face as the Indian lay back in his chair, with his eyes partly closed, and in the strong lines the white man read something of the character which was dominated by primitive emotions. The intense fire that flashed from the eyes, the fulness of the under lip, and the modelling of the chin, had long before told Marchand that Hattakowa would be an ardent lover. Now he guessed that Pakali must be the object of the Indian's passion.

Presently Miko came out of the house with Pakali. Uttering a cry of delight, the child ran to Hattakowa.

"Man Looking for the Sun, you have not taken me fishing for a long time," the boy said reproachfully, as he climbed upon the Indian's knee.

"It is more than a moon since our last expedition," Hattakowa replied, dropping into the Indian imagery that he liked to use with Miko. "When the frost comes we shall go for a hunt."

Miko caught sight of the ruby.

"Let me try on the pretty," he said, coaxingly, but Hattakowa drew away his hand.

"The ruby might bring the Little Chieftain bad luck," he explained.

"I want to be like the Man Looking for the Sun," Miko declared, with childish petulance. "I shall not fear bad luck."

But Hattakowa would not be persuaded to let Miko touch the ring.

Pakali had dinner for Marchand, Miko, and herself served in the parlour, while Beaumont and Hattakowa entertained Indians of all classes in the big dining room and the living room. The intimacy of the midday meal, which gave a whole hour alone with Pakali, was a compensation to Marchand for the disappointment of his days in Wauchula. After the Indians had gone back to the capitol, Pakali, opening the grand piano, played for her guest, and, later, from the veranda they watched the sun go down.

Marchand, who still retained Eastern ideas of conventionality, declined an invitation to the evening meal. With much reluctance he went down the hill to the old Poyner Tavern, which was still the principal hostelry in Tishomingo. Here he found many Indians quartered. At the long, narrow table in the dining room the fullbloods talked in their unintelligible dialect. Snatches of conversation that reached his ears from the end of the table where several brutal looking halfbreeds and ugly-visaged squaw men were talking, gave Marchand the information that there would be a determined effort to contest Hattakowa's election if the count were close. Once or twice a big halfbreed cast a suspicious glance at the stranger, who stayed but a short time at the table, where an untidy negro put before him dishes that he could not even taste.

The Poyner Tavern was a long, battened frame building, with a big door in the middle. On each side of the front

door were narrow glass windows, and a porch, that was little more than a shed, protected this entrance from the sun. The dining room was situated on one side of the house, and the office, from which a flight of rickety stairs ascended, occupied the remainder of the first floor space. Marchand shuddered at the thought of what the bedrooms might be. Lighting a cigar he stood upon the porch for a few moments while he looked in the direction of Moma Binna. He could hardly resist the impulse to climb the distant hill, but he was too wise to trespass upon the hospitality so cordially extended to him. He sauntered down the dusty path that led over the barren enclosure which, fenced with a wire netting, and closed with a gate weighted with a stone, comprised what was imaginatively termed the garden of the inn. He walked up and down in front of the tavern, and noticed with amusement that three lightning rods bristled from its warped shingle roof. Turning the corner, he came to the wagon-yard, without which no Territory hotel was complete. Here were many vehicles. In the centre of the wagon-yard several Indians were cooking supper over a blazing camp-fire, while others slept upon the ground under the horse-sheds.

Marchand walked far out on the hills. Pakali dominated his thoughts, although he reasoned that in her he sought a congenial friend during his period of exile from his native State. He belonged to one of the old Kentucky families whose fortunes had been reduced by the Civil War, and he had been glad to accept a salary from the Federal Government. Since he had attained manhood his father had seen that he had little business ability, but that he was one of the dreamers who found the world a pleasant place. He was young yet, and, therefore, the personality of a woman older than he in experience, if not in years, appealed to him. The story of the pathetic romance of the Chickasaw girl, as it had been told to him, aroused his chivalrous impulse. The knowledge he had gained of Hattakowa's love for his kinswoman

disturbed him, and yet it touched such a chord of sympathy that he felt drawn toward the Indian.

It was late when Marchand returned to the tavern. As he passed back of one of the horse-sheds he heard voices. The name of Joe Dixon was mentioned, and then someone said: "If we can't fix Tishomingo County we can trust to Gee-Haw Blikens to make it all right with the Pickens vote."

"Gee-Haw don't know enough to fix anything," was the reply.

"With Brown's help he'll put Sam Jenkins's count up where young Dixon can't touch it."

Marchand's footsteps silenced the voices. It was evident to the chance listener that Hattakowa's predictions concerning fraud were likely to be carried out. After a moment's hesitation, Marchand decided that the dialogue was not worth reporting until the next day. He went into the tavern, where he found his room was stifling, after his walk in the cool night air. He tossed for hours on the corn-husk mattress and, just before dawn, dressed in the light of a smoky hand lamp. He went down to the hotel porch, where he lounged upon the seat built in at one side of the doorway. He had fallen asleep, when he was aroused by the arrival of a horseman, a negro, who hastily dismounted and ran toward the tavern. The negro took from his torn straw hat a letter, addressed to one of the squaw men who had been prominent during the preceding day's election work.

"Ain't no one up?" the negro asked. "Dis yere's an impohtant communication from de bankah ovah at Wauchula. I'se been ridin' mos' o' de night to bring it heh."

Marchand directed that the landlord of the tavern be called, and then, almost before he was conscious of a distinct intention, he was on his way to Moma Binna.

For an hour he waited on the veranda, and as soon as there were signs of awakening, he sent a servant for Hattakowa. When Marchand had told his story of the conversa-

tion he had overheard, and had mentioned the arrival of the messenger, Hattakowa expressed no surprise.

"It is likely Brown has had Gee-Haw notify my opponents here that the returns from Pickens County will be late," Hattakowa remarked. "They will want some time in order to know just how much 'fixing' the votes will need."

Two eventful days went by; then it was generally understood that when, at the beginning of the next week, the legislature counted the votes, it would be found that Hattakowa had been elected.

CHAPTER XXI

THE CONTEST FOR POWER

WITH the assembling of the legislature, Tishomingo annually awoke from its usual torpor. On the Monday that the senate and the lower house were called to order in joint session to count the election returns, there was an unwonted crowd on the principal street of the town. Parties of horsemen rode in from Ardmore and Wauchula, and wagon loads of fullbloods and halfbreeds came from all directions. Beaumont had been a member of the senate for many terms and he was early in his chair, which was placed at the right hand side of the high platform where sat the Governor of the Chickasaw Nation, the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives. The joint session caused the big room to be crowded.

It was evident that the two Mattisons had their party well under control, for the fullbloods were brought in and placed carefully so that the Progressive party would be centralised among Hattakowa's scattered supporters. Gee-Haw Blikens stood against the wall, where the spectators jostled one another. Just as the gavel fell Hattakowa and Samuel Jenkins were seen to enter the legislative chamber. The President of the Senate pounded upon the deal table. Instantly there was a silence. The fullblood, Henry Sands's successor as Governor, was a stupid-looking Indian, who betrayed not the slightest interest in the proceedings.

When it was announced that the counting of the returns was next in the order of business, there was a stir of expectancy. Even the stolid fullbloods craned their necks to see the National Secretary, as he stepped forward to deliver a sealed package to the Speaker of the House. Four en-

velopes fell from the wrapping when the Speaker broke the seal. With due formality Panola County was first reported. It gave Hattakowa a sweeping majority. The announcement was cheered lustily by the Non-Progressive party, while the men under the Mattisons' control maintained silence. Tishomingo County gave but twenty votes to Jenkins. Again Hattakowa's friends cheered while their candidate, standing at the back of the room, made no sign, as he steadily watched the men on the platform. Pickens County returned a majority in even hundreds for Jenkins, and Pontotoc also went against Hattakowa.

A breathless silence lasted while the Speaker made a quick computation. The older Mattison smiled triumphantly at a moment when Beaumont was glancing back at Hattakowa.

Again the gavel dropped upon the deal table.

"The Speaker is ready to announce the returns," said a commanding voice. Stepping to the very edge of the platform, the Speaker began the legal formula, to which no one listened until he came to the words: "Joseph Dixon, having received a majority of fifty-five votes, I hereby declare to be the newly elected Governor of the Chickasaw Nation."

The interpreter repeated each word in the Chickasaw dialect, and instantly the room became a bedlam of confused sound. Hattakowa's friends cheered and shouted, while his opponents groaned and hissed. It was evident that Mattison and the other leaders of the Progressive party were astonished at the result. For a few moments their consternation prevented them from taking any action. The Speaker announced that Joseph Dixon would be conducted to the platform by George Beaumont and John Oaktree. Then Mattison took the floor.

"I protest!" he said. "There is a mistake in the returns of Pickens County. I ask that the installation of Joseph Dixon as Governor of the Chickasaw Nation be postponed until investigation can be made."

"No! No! No!" cried members of the Non-Progressive party, but the hubbub was so great that words could not be heard above the noise of moving chairs and stamping feet.

With his arms folded, Hattakowa looked on as if he were in no way concerned. He was quick to understand that in some manner the dishonest efforts of his enemies had miscarried; they had made a mistake in their calculations. He saw Gee-Haw Blikens slink away from the door, and noticed that the Mattisons were taking counsel with several squaw men.

Someone moved to adjourn until the next day, and Hattakowa passed out of doors with the crowd.

Henry Sands, who had been among the spectators, was always ready to act in times of emergency. Stationing himself upon the front steps of the capitol, he quietly invited all who belonged to the Non-Progressive party to report after sundown at Moma Binna, and every man was cautioned to keep secret the fact that a meeting had been arranged.

That night members of the legislature were not the only men who gathered at Moma Binna. Two hundred of Hattakowa's supporters came to offer assistance in asserting the rights of the new Governor. Before the hour of the conference Sands had had the grounds of Moma Binna patrolled so that there could be no danger of spies from the opposition. Then he addressed the men. He proposed that some time after midnight they should march to the capitol and take possession. This plan met with enthusiastic approval. While the men smoked and waited, scouts who were sent down to the Poyner tavern on reconnoitering tours, came back with the news that the two Mattisons were about the only sober members of the opposition party. In some mysterious way, several kegs of whisky had been smuggled into Tishomingo, and, as the town marshal and the sheriff belonged to the Progressive political faith, there was no interference with the orgy.

It was judged advisable to delay the march to the capitol until three o'clock in the morning, when most of the revellers would be sleeping off the effects of their debauch. Then, under cover of darkness, the men, with Hattakowa leading, and Beaumont and Sands bringing up the rear, moved noiselessly down the hill. The Indian instinct, long dormant, appeared to awaken, and the members of the Non-Progressive party walked in single file as stealthily as if they were starting upon the war path.

Beaumont had the keys of the capitol; entrance, therefore, was easy. The two hundred men took possession without being discovered. It had been stipulated by Beaumont that no one should carry a weapon of any sort.

"We have right on our side," he said, "and we must not lay ourselves open to the temptation of resorting to violence."

When the hour for the morning session came, the men who had kept the night's vigil had breakfasted in camp style from supplies hastily provided by Beaumont and Sands, and the members of the legislature were in their places long before the opposition began to arrive. Hattakowa occupied a seat on the platform, and, when the fullblood who had held the chief office in the Nation came in, he hesitated a moment before going to his chair. The President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House showed surprise when they first saw Hattakowa, but, according to the returns, he was the newly elected Governor, and they began the business of the day without appearing to notice anything unusual. From the floor, Sands, who was a member of the Senate, moved that Joseph Dixon be installed as Governor. The motion was seconded, and, before the opposition knew what was happening, Hattakowa was taking the oath of office.

In clear, steady tones the new Governor of the Chickasaws addressed his people. He said he stood for justice to the Indians, who must, necessarily, be the victims of the white

man's progress. As head of the Nation he declared that he would fight every measure that threatened to deprive the Chickasaws of their allotment of the lands which was their lawful heritage.

"The water still runs, and the grass still grows," he said, in conclusion, "but while the streams are yet flowing over the green plains there will dawn a day the sun of which will shine upon not one acre of farm or forest that belongs to the Indian. I am an obstructionist who would postpone the time of our tribal extinction. I know that we must become as the dead leaves of long-forgotten autumns; I know that our name must be written in blood upon the pages of the white man's history. I know that the good in us will never be known to those who have taught us how bad it is possible for a man to become. But, in these last years of the existence of the Five Nations, I would compel the white man to realise how great we might have been if he had recognised the brotherhood of the races which should bind together all the children of the earth."

While Hattakowa spoke, even his enemies listened with respect, and they were still under the spell of his personality when they heard him name the officers whom it was the Governor's privilege to appoint. After Hattakowa had formed his staff, the session was adjourned.

The next day the sheriff of Pickens County presented an amended election report, which was duly sworn to. This set forth that an error had been made in the count, and it gave to Jenkins a majority which entitled him to the coveted office. The report was not accepted, for the Non-Progressive party was able to have it put upon the table until the returns could be investigated.

For several days Hattakowa and his party caused the business of the legislature to proceed as smoothly as if all disputes had been settled. In Pickens County Judge Maury and his son were engaged in an attempt to prove that fraudu-

lent votes had been counted, but they did not succeed in getting any evidence, except that which showed that Billy Brown had given money and advice to the Progressive party. It was evident that the banker had been shrewd enough to make the two Mattisons believe in his honesty and disinterestedness.

At the various sessions of the legislature there was an air of suppressed excitement and apprehension. On the day that the elder Mattison introduced into the senate a bill designating the Wauchula National Bank as the repository of the tribal funds of the Chickasaw Nation, the expected outbreak occurred. Parliamentary formalities were ignored by the Non-Progressive party, which accused Mattison of being the agent of the white interlopers, the most dangerous of whom was Billy Brown, president of the bank. There was a scene of such turbulence that Sands and Beaumont moved an adjournment. In the afternoon a joint session of the two houses was called. Then it was noticed that Hattakowa sat upon the platform. As Governor Dixon, he readily obtained a hearing. In a few words he explained how he had come into possession of certain documents that were of interest to the Chickasaw Nation. With Sands as interpreter, he read, line by line, the copies of Billy Brown's papers which had been lost in the cyclone. Even when the Mattisons comprehended the meaning of the syndicate formed for the importation of Mississippi Indians to claim shares in the Territory lands, they tried to drown Hattakowa's voice by cries of " Out of order! Out of order! " The new Governor stopped for a moment, while the President of the Senate restored quiet.

" I demand respect for my office, if not for myself," said Hattakowa, throwing back his head, and casting a flashing glance upon his audience. There was majesty in his pose. With a dominant power that might have been part of the great chief Apushamatahah's legacy to him, he compelled

silence. When the reading was ended, Jimmy Sunfish, in behalf of the fullbloods, who were slow to understand the meaning of legal phraseology, asked that certain paragraphs be repeated. Hattakowa read a second time from the provisions according to which thousands of acres could be obtained by the scheming white men.

A murmur of anger rose in volume until it became a deafening clamour. Standing upon his chair Cole Mattison shouted: "Why do you listen to thieves who steal a man's private papers?" One of John Oaktree's sons dragged him from the chair. The fullbloods looked and listened with but a vague understanding of the meaning of the scene. From the platform Hattakowa looked down upon the surging crowd, for not a man remained in his seat, and spectators mingled with the legislators. The President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House took turns in wielding the gavel, but no one paid any attention to their efforts for the restoration of order. Presently the Speaker of the House sent the pages through the crowd to announce that the Senate would retire to its separate chamber, and the withdrawal of the stronger body of men made it possible for the House to take up the regular business of the day.

CHAPTER XXII

THE SIEGE OF THE CAPITOL

Two mornings later when Hattakowa went early to the capitol with Beaumont, Sands, and John Oaktree, they found four of the Indian police guarding the doors.

"You must not enter," said one of the men, respectfully saluting the Governor.

"By whose order am I barred out from my office in this building?" Hattakowa asked.

"Senator Mattison telegraphed to Washington, and the Department of the Interior has ordered the United States Marshal to lock the capitol until the contest can be settled," was the answer.

"Until I receive some direct notification I shall not recognise the order," replied Hattakowa, passing the unresisting guards and opening the doors for his friends, many of whom had gathered during the brief dialogue.

In a quarter of an hour a large force of Indian police with the United States Marshal in command surrounded the capitol. Inside the building fifty of Hattakowa's friends had entrenched themselves in the suite of rooms that served as the Governor's private offices. A few of the younger halfbreeds carried firearms, but the new Governor requested his friends to remember that he was the representative of law and order. Inasmuch as the Department of the Interior had not issued a command to him, he held that he had the right to retain his office by force, if necessary, until legal cause for his removal could be produced.

As the day wore on, an excited crowd gathered on the capitol hill. The duly accredited members of the legislature

protested when they were not admitted to the capitol, but the guards had received reinforcements, and no one passed the doors through which Hattakowa had effected an entrance.

After night had fallen, the United States Marshal, who declined to permit any food to be delivered to the men inside the building, winked at the fact that much whisky was being passed around among the members of the Progressive party, who shared their flasks with the Indian police.

An hour after midnight a drunken fullblood fired a rifle shot through the windows of the Governor's office. This was a signal for a fusillade from a score of intoxicated halfbreeds and squaw men. The maudlin crowd was instantly transformed into a desperate mob, which still retained enough of reasoning power to feel the instinct of self-protection. Falling back behind the trees the men waited to see whether their fire would be returned. The Indian police vainly tried to disperse the mob, but the night watch was helpless against the overwhelming number composing the disorderly crowd.

The doors of the capitol had been locked on the inside. Suddenly they were thrown open and Hattakowa stood alone upon the steps. Behind him shone a big lamp, against the light of which his tall figure was strongly silhouetted. Peering out into the darkness, he sought to locate the attacking force. A bullet whistled above his uncovered head.

"Cowards," he shouted, "come here where I can speak to you."

The drunken men slunk farther into the shadows of the trees.

"We don't want to hear you," answered Cole Mattison, who had been leaning against the wall of the building. Slowly he walked up the capitol steps and, without warning, struck at Hattakowa. "I have a chance to pay an old grudge now!" he cried. "I have hated you all my life."

The two men clinched. For a few moments there was a contest of strength so evenly matched that the mob left the

shelter of the trees to get a nearer view of the struggle. Mattison, who was heavier that Hattakowa, dragged him down the steps, but the assailant was not so skilful a wrestler as the man who defended himself from an unprovoked attack. By a lucky stroke Hattakowa felled his enemy, and, when he had him down, turned contemptuously from his vanquished foe. As soon as he could recover breath, Hattakowa spoke to the crowd, that had formed a circle around the antagonists.

"You have wounded one of the sons of John Oaktree," he said. "As Governor of the Chickasaw Nation, I shall cause the punishment of every man who has used firearms to-night."

"You are Governor for a week!" jeered a drunken half-breed. "We're going to count you out."

Hattakowa's lips curled scornfully.

"I want to speak to the United States Marshal," he said, ignoring the remark, and looking for the officer, who was not in the crowd.

"The marshal's down in the tavern taking a rest," volunteered someone.

"Tell him I desire to see him, and have him bring a physician with him," commanded Hattakowa, before whom the mob fell back as he turned to ascend the capitol steps.

Gee-Haw Blikens staggered toward him.

"Them there papahs I found ain't goin' to do you much good," he taunted with a maudlin laugh. "You all's land's goin' to be cut up and give away and you can't he'p it!"

Hattakowa looked at the white man as he would have glanced at an ugly cur, and, not deigning further to notice him, crossed the threshold of the capitol, without encountering interference from the guards, who were secretly his friends.

He had just entered the building when a horseman rode up to the steps. The rider compelled the crowd to give way

before him, and, alighting, looked down at the mob, which mistook him for a messenger who might bear important news.

"Where is Governor Dixon?"

"If you go to find him, you'll have to stay with him," answered a surly white man. "If you're a friend of his'n, you'd better go back where you come from."

The drunken guards aroused themselves enough to stand in the doorway when Marchand tried to enter the capitol.

"I come from the Dawes Commission," said Marchand, with a voice of authority, and the men stood back to let him pass.

He found Hattakowa, Beaumont, and Sands, who opened the barricaded doors to let him into the rooms, where they had passed many anxious hours.

"I heard that General Chillingsworth was on his way here, and I lost no time in coming to tell you, Mr. Dixon," he said, shaking Hattakowa's hand with a clasp that gave assurance of his understanding of the situation. "The General will report to the Department of the Interior, and you need have no fear that he will not be just."

On a long settee in the corner lay John Oaktree's son, to whom Sands had given intelligent attention. A bullet had shattered the young man's arm, and he was exhausted from loss of blood.

"Inasmuch as General Chillingsworth is coming, I think it is wise for us to persuade Jenkins and his friends to agree that they will suspend hostilities until the Department of the Interior can arbitrate," said Beaumont. "In the old days we could have held the capitol until our warlike spirit would have won the admiration and loyalty of all the fullbloods, but now we shall have the greedy white population against us, with Billy Brown and others of his kind to foment all sorts of troubles."

"You speak wisely," answered Sands. "We have a hundred hidden foes to every open enemy."

"I have sent for the United States Marshal who, as usual, is not to be found," announced Hattakowa.

After the fusillade the lamps, which Hattakowa had quickly extinguished, had not been relighted, and the largest room of the office suite was dimly illuminated by a candle stuck into an empty ink bottle. Beaumont searched Hattakowa's desk for papers, and, seating himself at a convenient table, began to draw up articles of agreement by which Jenkins and Hattakowa should pledge themselves to abide by the decision of the Department of the Interior. When the draft of the agreement was finished, Marchand went out in search of the marshal, who had arrived with Jenkins. Hattakowa was soon summoned.

"It is my duty to arrest you for resisting the Indian police," declared the marshal, an ugly-visaged mixedblood.

"As Governor of the Nation, I advise you to arrest the men who fired upon the capitol to-night, and those who supplied the whisky that made the crowd irresponsible," Hattakowa answered.

The marshal looked at him angrily, and, hearing a shout from the crowd outside, withdrew to discuss the situation with Jenkins. In an hour he came back with the document signed by Samuel Jenkins. Hattakowa affixed his signature to it.

Just before dawn the capitol was evacuated by Hattakowa and his friends. The Indian police, who had been doing but half-hearted service, because Hattakowa had been the most fearless member of the Chickasaw force, obeyed with alacrity orders issued by the Governor. A litter for John Oaktree's son was improvised, and one of the men went in search of a physician.

In order that he might lock in the vault the copy of his agreement with Jenkins, Hattakowa lingered in his office after the others had gone out. When he entered the corridor leading to the main hall of the capitol he found it so

dark that he had to feel his way. Hattakowa had never known fear, but, as he turned the key in the office door, he thought he was conscious that someone was lurking near him. He walked a few steps, and then he was sure that he was followed. As he turned, an unseen hand stabbed him, and, when the knife was withdrawn, he felt a stinging pain in his right shoulder. He tried to lift his arm to seize his assailant, but his hand was powerless.

There was a second of sickening uncertainty, as if the unseen foe waited to know how well he had done his work, and Hattakowa had presence of mind enough to back up against the wall, where he waited until his enemy should make a second lunge at him. Groping in the dark, the hand that held the dagger touched him and he sprang with the lightness and suppleness that distinguishes the Indian wrestler. Although his right arm was helpless, he used his left with such adroitness that he wrested the knife from his antagonist as they fell together to the floor. Hattakowa felt the blood gush from his wound, and a faintness almost overcame him. In that moment his enemy thrust him aside, and he could hear him steal away in the direction of the rear of the building. With difficulty Hattakowa drew himself to his feet. Holding the bloody knife he had captured, he managed to make his way out into the fresh morning air, to Beaumont and Marchand, who were waiting for him on the hill, a few yards from the capitol.

CHAPTER XXIII

DEFEAT

When General Chillingsworth arrived at Tishomingo, he found that the Governor of the Chickasaw Nation had been seriously wounded. The night of mob rule had wrought a change in public sentiment. The white settlers, who beheld the situation from the vantage ground of spectators, believed that the grossest frauds had been practised, and it had been demonstrated to them that the Non-Progressive party was the one which was civilised, and that the Progressive party contained many who were ready to resort to violence to attain their ends. Marchand had remained in Tishomingo because he found he could be of service to Pakali's father, and he proved to be of much assistance in collecting information for the department inspector. The day before his return to Washington General Chillingsworth was permitted to see Hattakowa, who had already begun to chafe against the restraint of the sick room at Moma Binna.

"In Indian Territory, politics seems to be a dangerous pursuit," remarked General Chillingsworth, as he stood by the bed upon which Hattakowa lay.

"You see we Chickasaws are becoming so civilised that we are ready to commit murder in the name of law and order, where formerly we scalped one another in the name of hate and revenge," replied Hattakowa.

"This is a bad business," declared the General. "There appears to be not the least doubt that you were elected, and by a larger count than was first returned."

"That fact will not make much difference with the decision of the Department of the Interior," answered Hatta-

kowa. " By the time you reach Washington there will be so much evidence and so much testimony to counterbalance your report that the Department will not dare to make a decision for me."

" The Federal Government follows the policy which is believed to be best for the Indian," the General replied, with the laudable desire of defending the authorities at Washington.

" It is four hundred years too late for us to expect justice," said Hattakowa, wearily turning his head on the pillow.

The General took leave of him with many assurances of friendship, but the glimpse of the inspector merely strengthened Hattakowa's conviction that he could not hope for federal support.

The next day Marchand accompanied General Chillingsworth on a trip to Pickens County, and at Moma Binna life gradually assumed its usual routine. Mrs. Dixon had come to take care of her son, and when Hattakowa was out of danger he was conscious that the vague impression of Pakali's presence, felt during the days of extreme weakness, had not been due to his habit of dreaming of her. Often she sat in the chair at the head of his bed, and her nearness soothed his troubled spirit. Miko now and then tiptoed in to gaze solemnly at The Man Looking for the Sun, and once, when no one was watching, the child placed upon Hattakowa's pillow his most prized possession—a pollywog he had lately caught in a shallow pool at the edge of Pennington Creek.

One morning Hattakowa awoke feeling much refreshed. He had had a dream in which he and Pakali seemed to be journeying through a forest on a road that would never end. He came back to the real world with a start, and, after he had thought for a long time, he asked his mother whether he might be permitted to talk for half an hour.

Mrs. Dixon bade him to be patient, but, with a man's wilfulness, he asserted that he intended to show how far he

had recovered. Long before it was time for Pakali and her father to visit him he was restless and impatient. When they did come he was looking tired. Beaumont reported that, notwithstanding all his efforts, it was impossible to find out who had been cowardly enough to stab a man in the dark.

" I can hardly believe that Cole Mattison, whom we have known since he was a boy, could commit such an act even though he was drunk," declared Beaumont, " and yet, he had insulted you earlier in the evening, and it is a plausible theory that he might try to retaliate for your easy victory over him."

" It does not seem possible that anyone could hate Hattakowa," remarked Pakali, smiling upon her kinsman.

" Cole Mattison has the Indian love of leadership," said Beaumont, " and somehow he has always envied Hattakowa, ever since their schooldays, when all the boys disliked Cole."

" When I am well I shall be able to find my foe," said Hattakowa, with confidence in his tone. He motioned toward the chair in which he wished Pakali to sit. As he made the gesture with his long, thin, left hand, Pakali saw that the ruby flashed on his finger. After Beaumont had gone away Hattakowa removed the ring.

" Pakali, will you let me talk to you very seriously? " he said. His brown skin showed the peculiar opaque shade that illness gives to persons of the darker races, and there were lines about the eyes and mouth that marked the thought and experiences of an intense nature. His voice was so solemn that Pakali answered, evasively:

" Why should you be serious to-day? Isn't it enough to be happy because your life is spared? "

" As I have lain here helpless I have felt that, for me, life is not a gift I can value without the love of my Star Woman."

" Often you have told me you would not mention the forbidden subject," Pakali answered gently.

"I mean to be so strong"—Hattakowa drew a long breath—"yet when you know that I think of you every waking hour you will forgive my thoughts for taking words. In these hours when I have had time to think, I have admitted to myself the impossibility of helping my people. We must submit to the white man's tyranny. The spirit in me is a survival of a dying race. If it were not for you and for my mother I should regret my returning strength."

Pakali put her hand upon Hattakowa's and said softly: "We cannot change our destinies."

"Yet," he spoke slowly, "the weakness in me craves some word that might make the future years beckon to me. I talk to you to-day because I must face the task of living and I know there can be no halfway place where you and I can meet."

"I thought," faltered Pakali, "I thought we were almost contented."

Hattakowa turned his head on his pillow and was silent for a few moments.

"Could you kiss me, Pakali?" he asked presently. "I am going away from Moma Binna to-morrow, and after that, when the Department of the Interior has notified me that I am not Governor, I shall leave the Territory for a time."

Pakali, leaning over Hattakowa, touched her lips to his, and her tears fell upon his face. Quickly she left the room, and Hattakowa replaced the ruby ring upon his finger.

CHAPTER XXIV

MIKO'S EDUCATION BEGINS

MUCH to the astonishment of Beaumont and Mrs. Dixon, Hattakowa insisted upon being removed to his ranch the day after his conversation with Pakali. Although he was warned that the trip might cause him serious injury, he persisted in his determination to leave Moma Binna. He had been at the ranch a fortnight when an official communication from the Department of the Interior reached him. This set forth that, whereas, before the correct count of electors had been made, Joseph Dixon had been installed as Governor of the Chickasaw Nation, the office was held by him illegally. With due formality the said Joseph Dixon was ordered to surrender all that pertained to the disputed office to Samuel Jenkins, who was declared to be the rightful Governor.

As soon as he was able to travel, Hattakowa started for Colorado. During the weeks of his confinement to the house he had become affected with the melancholy that attacks a strong man when suddenly made helpless. He had never before been ill, and, in the years since he had attained manhood, he had been able to escape his thoughts when they pressed upon him too insistently. Nature had always brought peace to him after he had been vexed by the contemplation of his life's problems, but, now that he was shut in beneath a roof which hid the heavens, he had faced the future squarely. Lying in bed day after day he had wearily reasoned in a circle which invariably brought him back to the one hopeless conclusion that Pakali was lost to him forever. His recent association with her had but served to make him understand that the savage instinct to kill the man who thwarted his will was nurtured by each day's added knowl-

edge of what Pakali might have been to him. In a dumb agony of rebellion he had longed to find Arnold Stuart. In imagination he had felt the fierce joy of killing him. He had thirsted for blood vengeance, the Indian's panacea for all wrong. The idea of blood vengeance gradually burned into his brain. Although he knew that Pakali's love had been given irrevocably to the white man, still his heart demanded her freedom. When Miko, grave-eyed and wondering, had come to his bedside at Moma Binna, he had cursed Heaven because the child was not his son.

Hattakowa did not care for the things that most men crave. He had abundant wealth, but money meant little to him. The personal prominence that the position as Governor of the Chickasaws would have given him was distasteful to his nature, which shrank from responsibility. It was a relief rather than a disappointment when the decision of the Department of the Interior reached him. He had done what he could for his people, but now he found himself without any inspiring interest in the little world that lay within the Territory. The physician had prescribed change of scene. Once he had mentioned a trip to Europe, but Hattakowa scornfully declared that the cities the white man had built would not teach him resignation to the Indian's lot. Palaces would remind him of kings who oppressed their subjects, he said. " No, I shall go away from cities," he announced.

So Hattakowa journeyed to the Rocky Mountains, leaving Pakali with an ache in her heart because he suffered through her.

In the Territory months of quiet followed the excitement of the election. The proceedings of the legislature were marked by frequent clashes between the Progressive and the Non-Progressive members, and little business had been finished when the session was ended. The Non-Progressive party gained one victory of importance: Billy Brown's bank did not obtain the custody of the Chickasaw public funds.

The exposure of the banker's connection with the syndicate made it impossible for any member of the legislature to support the bill designating the Kansan as a person worthy to be entrusted with money belonging to the Indians. Thus far, Hattakowa had been able to do his people a service. Samuel Jenkins, the Governor, retired to his ranch after the adjournment of the legislature.

At Moma Binna, Pakali and Miko found the house too large. The many closed rooms gave a deserted air to the rambling building. Although she passed several hours a day in teaching her son, Pakali discovered that the time dragged. Occasional visits from her Aunt Totopehah relieved the monotony, but when Hattakowa sent for his mother, to whom he promised a long pleasure trip through the mountains, Pakali felt a loneliness that threw her back upon her own memories for companionship.

Twice within the next year Philip Marchand came to Tishomingo and Pakali welcomed him as if he were one of her kinsmen. The young Kentuckian acknowledged a severe homesickness, and his longing for friends was met with a quick sympathy, since Pakali confessed to him that she felt a restlessness which was almost discontent. Marchand brought her the newest books, and, in return, she played for him the great compositions they both loved.

Marchand had become a valuable employe of the Dawes Commission. As his work gave him more and more of an insight into the condition of the Indians of the Territory, he became an enthusiastic partisan of the Five Nations. He and Pakali discussed the future of the Territory, when he brought reports of the crowds that were pouring into Muscogee. On the occasion of his second visit, Pakali drew his attention to several new cottages on a street recently laid out. There was talk of a new capitol building, she told him, and he answered that he feared Tishomingo would soon be as commonplace as any other western town.

In the second year of Hattakowa's absence from the Territory, Beaumont, who managed his affairs, was directed to set aside a fund of several thousand dollars for the employment of attorneys who should protect the interests of ignorant fullbloods. Hattakowa wrote seldom, and most of his letters were addressed to Miko, as they contained promises of ponies, guns, and numerous other things dear to a boy's heart.

It happened that Pakali's long-cherished idea of a school was realised in a most unexpected manner. One day Beaumont declared that Miko needed companions. The old man said the boy must not be tied too closely to his mother's apron string, lest he should grow to be a woman-hearted Chickasaw instead of a fine young brave. Therefore, several of the vacant rooms were opened. A dozen Indian children were invited to attend school at Moma Binna, and a teacher from a northern normal college was engaged. Then Pakali found something partially to fill the void in her life. In preparing Miko for his future, she could extend her influence far beyond Moma Binna. She could help many of those who would be the Chickasaws of a to-morrow in which the waters would run, and the grass would grow on lands possessed no longer by the Indian.

BOOK III

CHAPTER XXV

AUTUMN

EARLY autumn had spread a haze over Indian Territory. In the valleys the fields were yellow and brown, after long weeks of drought. Oak and maple trees were touched with the golden hue to which the springtime green fades when the frosts are late in coming. In the valley lands the brown and emptying cotton stalks waved in the gentle breezes that swept northward from the Gulf, and along the winding roads that led from plantations to towns lay the white waste of an abundant harvest.

Past Tishomingo, Pennington Creek, shrunken in its rocky course, hastened on with a softened sound that told how much of its springtime power had been lost in the summer months. Its quiet pools, over which the willows hung, were shallower, and many a long-washed boulder was exposed high above the level of the stream. Here and there foot bridges had been thrown across the creek, which now hurried by an ambitious town where once had stagnated a picturesque village.

Tishomingo had changed in the four years which had passed since Hattakowa had borne for a brief month the title and the responsibilities of the office of Governor of the Chickasaw Nation. In those four years the white man had gradually appropriated the Territory to his own uses. He had established new towns, and in the old settlements he had crowded out the Indian, whose lands he had coveted. Tishomingo had been the last place to feel the transforming touch of the dominant race. Long after Muscogee had become a city which boasted its likeness to a state capital; long after Ardmore had grown into an important centre of business activity, Tishomingo remained undisturbed. Then the

much-advertised Choctaw route extended its iron rails to the Chickasaw seat of government. A picturesque station was erected and travellers by the hundred stopped to admire the big stone capitol, which had replaced the historic old brick building on the hill. By and by, some of these travellers came back to explore what they called the most beautiful valley in the Territory. And then, almost before the fullbloods who lived far out on the hills had heard that Tishomingo was attracting attention, a new town had replaced the old settlement. In thirty days a three-story brick hotel, with all the latest modern improvements, was erected on the main street, and opposite it rose a bank building of dressed stone, like that which had been used in the walls of the new capitol. Within the space of six months Tishomingo grew from a population of a few hundred to two thousand. Merchants rushed to the growing town, and stores which were miniature copies of Chicago places of business, crowded out the wooden shacks where general merchandise consisting of tobacco, bandana handkerchiefs, and calfskin boots, had been previously sold.

When Pakali looked down upon Tishomingo from the place where she had stood with Hattakowa on the night of Stuart's arrival ten years before, she had the feeling that she was an alien. It was as if the old Tishomingo by some strange magic had been replaced by a new city. Moma Binna remained as the one of the few houses identified with the old settlement. Pakali's school had made necessary the addition of a large wing, with doors opening upon verandas on both sides of the structure. Here, in company with nearly one hundred Indian children, Miko's education was now proceeding under the most favourable circumstances. Most of the dozen pupils that had begun with the first class, four years before, still contended with Miko for honour marks in the primary studies. The manual training department had proved most fascinating to the brown-skinned boys

and girls. Beaumont gave hearty assistance whenever financial aid was necessary. He declared that Pakali had inherited the missionary spirit from the Little Mother, and it was as if he were helping some plan the wife he mourned would have led him to encourage.

The new inhabitants of Tishomingo had little knowledge of Indian life, and they often showed an insulting curiosity concerning the rambling house on the hill, for the doors of Moma Binna were closed to strangers. The newcomers were disposed to assume a patronising attitude toward the Chickasaws, and Pakali, quick to detect a supercilious note in the tone of cordiality with which she was met at church and elsewhere, held aloof from the families of the white fortune seekers. She knew that tourists, from the big brick hotel, watched the wagons and saddle horses which each morning carried children up the hill to Moma Binna. Now and then travellers ventured to climb up to the old garden, made beautiful since city waterworks permitted lavish irrigation. Flowers had been one of the Little Mother's joys, and Pakali cultivated the roses that she had been taught to love. A smooth lawn now extended to the ledge where Pakali stood so often to look out upon the little part of the world which belonged to her life. When venturesome tourists caught a glimpse of her, they acknowledged to one another that the stories of her beauty were not exaggerated, and they commented upon the fact that she dressed according to the latest mode.

The years had changed Pakali, for the Indian of the South matures early and ages quickly, but time had merely put a mellowing touch upon her beauty. Her form, fuller and stronger in its lines, had lost nothing of its supple grace. She still had the girlish slenderness of waist and the litheness of movement that had been counted among her youthful charms. In repose her face had the settled sadness which told of the soul's surrender to a haunting sorrow. In her dark

eyes the lights of mirth and hope shone as if through shadows. The Indian habit of reticence had taken hold of her; she had learned the art of self-repression inasmuch as she had discovered that one who had been robbed of love must make terms with fate. She seldom permitted herself to indulge in the luxury of remembering happier days. Upon Miko she poured all the sweet incense of a heart capable of intense emotion.

Pakali had been often lonely since Hattakowa had withdrawn from all association with her. Twice in the four years just passed, with her father and Miko, she had taken long journeys. Once they had travelled for six months in Europe, where she had vexed herself by trying to understand how easily Stuart might have forgotten her in such surroundings. In Paris, the Territory appeared to be a part of another age. Notwithstanding all her attempts at logic, Pakali knew that what Hattakowa called the " great love " took no account of time or place. When she visited cities she was oppressed with the sense that she did not belong to the races which had achieved all that was represented by the word civilisation; she shrank from the attention that her father attracted, for the old Chickasaw was easily recognised as an Indian, and the scar on his cheek drew to him many questioning glances.

Miko each year showed more strongly his Chickasaw blood. On shipboard he proudly proclaimed that he was an Indian, and everywhere they went he was spoiled by women who admired his peculiar type of physical attractiveness. With a sense of relief Pakali had returned to Tishomingo; each excursion into the white man's world helped to reconcile her to the surroundings that had been hers since babyhood.

After the building of the railroad Marchand came oftener to Tishomingo. The years had proved him worthy of a woman's friendship, and Pakali had begun to treat him much as she had treated Hattakowa.

The Creek, Seminole, and Cherokee allotments had involved so much labour that the Chickasaws and Choctaws had been compelled to wait for their apportionment, but the time had now come when offices in the Tishomingo capitol were being prepared for a corps of clerks from the force employed by the Dawes Commission.

Marchand had been given the promise that he should be one of the men entrusted with the Chickasaw allotment, and he came frequently to Tishomingo in order to transact preliminary business. On the morning after he had passed a night at the new hotel the young Kentuckian went to Moma Binna to see Pakali, for an hour, before he had to return to Muscogee. He happened to reach the house just as the Indian pupils were assembling for school. Miko, grown to be a tall stripling of a boy, ran to meet him, for they had become good friends.

" Don't you want me to ride with you? " asked Miko. " I am tired of books, because it is a long time since the Man Looking for the Sun let me go anywhere with him."

The boy had many of his mother's ways, and now he looked up at Marchand with such pretty pleading in his big eyes that it was difficult to resist the temptation to make a holiday trip far into the country.

" You must not neglect your studies," admonished Marchand, with a smile, as he put his hand upon the child's shoulder. " You have grown so fast that we must all realise how soon you will be a man."

Miko knitted his strongly marked black brows, as he thought for a moment:

" I am only nine," he said, " and the Man Looking for the Sun always tells me that I can learn much from the forests and rivers."

At this moment Pakali, who had been tying up a rose bush, came to greet the visitor.

" I can guess that Miko has been trying to make you a

conspirator who will help him escape from school to-day," she remarked. " My son has the Indian love of the woods. Every day he seems to develop some trait of the savage. Last summer he rebelled against the tyranny of clothes."

" All boys are two-thirds barbarian," Marchand declared, " and they don't lose all their primitive instincts even when they are grown to be men. If you will be a partner in an outdoor expedition to-day, I will play truant with Miko, for, like him, I am tired of books." Addressing the boy, he added: " My books are worse than any that the teachers give you here in Moma Binna. I have to study big white pages covered with puzzling figures which designate land measurements."

Pakali shook her head, and, with something of her old girlish manner, answered:

" There is no favouritism here at Moma Binna. If you take Miko and me out into the woods, you will have to invite three teachers and one hundred pupils, including Billy Blikens."

" Much as I crave your society, Mrs. Stuart, I believe that when it is diluted by the presence of a hundred other persons it is a pleasure too tantalising to be sought without careful deliberation." Marchand spoke in a bantering tone, which carried with it more than the supeficial meaning of his words.

" Remember you are setting aside an opportunity to become acquainted with Billy Blikens," warned Pakali.

" Couldn't I be introduced to Billy now? " suggested the Kentuckian. " I confess I am curious to see Gee-Haw's daughter, who is likely to cause me much trouble in the course of the inevitable litigation which must accompany the settlement of Mr. Brown's numerous claims."

At that moment Gee-Haw Blikens drove up the hill a harnessed team of oxen, that had been attracting much attention in Tishomingo, which now counted the shiftless Blikens

among its residents. Gee-Haw's financial resources had been steadily reduced since the birth of the little girl upon whom he had promised to bestow the banker's name, and he had lost his last horses. In earlier days he had acquired his nickname because his laziness enabled him to drive oxen with inexhaustible patience, and, when he needed beasts of burden he naturally recalled his former ability in managing the slow-going animals. He had a set of harness on his hands, and the idea of utilising it had been applied with moderate success.

Marchand could not help smiling when he saw Gee-Haw pull upon the spliced lines in order to halt a badly matched yoke of oxen. From a rickety old wagon the squaw man lifted a small child, barely four years old. The little girl wore a faded sunbonnet and a torn gingham frock. Her thin legs were encased in stockings much in need of mending, and her whole appearance betokened neglect.

"Come here, Billy," called Pakali, "I want this gentleman to see you."

Billy hung back. Upon her wizened, colourless little face was a look of shrewd caution, and she immediately took refuge behind the skirt of Pakali's linen gown.

"The other younguns are comin' a-foot," Gee-Haw announced, as he stood holding his team, which was restless under the difficult task of chewing the cud while horses' bits were adjusted to their mouths.

Marchand nodded to the squaw man, whom he despised, because he knew that Beaumont and Dixon had been frequently called upon to contribute to the support of the Blikens family. Pakali, who had taken little Billy's hand, spoke a few kindly words to the child's father, and then, when the ox-team had been started down the hill, she led the way back to the house, where Billy and Miko were turned over to their teachers.

While the children were gathering for the morning session,

Pakali and Marchand sat upon the veranda. The brooding quiet of the autumn soothed their spirits. For several moments Pakali looked out upon the distant hills. In the garden, beds of dahlias were contrasting their flaming colours with the green of the smoothly shaven lawn; the vines and rose bushes that covered the porch were crimson and yellow and brown, and, as the fresh morning breeze stirred their foliage, it carried away with it the scent of the drying leaves. As Pakali's gaze was withdrawn from the hills, her eyes caught the panorama presented by the spreading town of Tishomingo, and she exclaimed:

"Each day I feel more and more an alien in my own land. Behold the white man's city!"

"Tishomingo has changed so much that I forget I am in the Chickasaw Nation until I come to Moma Binna," Marchand answered. "You know I am often ashamed to think that, in my humble way, I am helping this metamorphosis."

"My father reminds me almost daily that we must be reconciled to what is inevitable," said Pakali. "In this march of civilisation the red man must be trampled upon and annihilated. It would be easier, however, to take a philosophical view of the situation if what is proudly spoken of as Tishomingo's boom had not brought so many undesirable persons from Wauchula."

"Gee-Haw Blikens and his family are not exactly the sort of settlers that an ambitious town would like to add to its population," averred Marchand.

Marchand left the chair in which he had been sitting. Leaning against one of the pillars of the veranda, he looked down upon Pakali and, when she met his gaze, she felt the delicate understanding Marchand had of her peculiar position as an Indian woman among the white usurpers in her native village. Always reverential toward women, the young Kentuckian gave to Pakali the homage which had in it tenderness as well as admiration.

"You do not find many friends among the white women. Why is it?" he asked.

"Most of the newcomers have the feeling of contempt for the Indians." An indignant light came into Pakali's eyes. "Even when they realise that we are educated, they treat us with an air of condescension which is intolerable. Sometimes I wish I could be as sarcastic as Hattakowa, of whom they are all afraid."

"Where is Mr. Dixon now?" Marchand made the inquiry in a constrained voice. Since the day when he had discovered Hattakowa's love for Pakali, he had avoided mentioning the Indian who had once called him "friend."

"Hattakowa has been away on another of his long hunting expeditions. He is coming back next week for the opening of the legislature."

Pakali spoke of Hattakowa in a natural way that put Marchand at his ease. After a brief pause she went on:

"You know our legislature will meet but a few times more, and father says this is the last session in which any important business can be transacted. The Non-Progressive party intends to make a last stand against the land syndicates."

"It will be a hopeless fight," declared Marchand. "I happen to know that certain bills, drafted by Elisha Fordham, the former congressman, will be rushed through by the Mattison faction. Even if your father and Mr. Dixon could prevent the bills from receiving the official acquiescence of the Chickasaw Nation, the land-grabbing would go on just the same."

The mention of Fordham's name brought back to Pakali the recollection of Stuart's mission to the Territory, but she had learned to bear the pangs of memory without betraying any sign of the pain she suffered. She turned her face away from Marchand, and, carefully measuring her words, said:

"I think I am a little morbid these days, but I am haunted by a dread of impending trouble. It is impossible

for me to escape from the feeling that I am waiting for some tragedy. I don't know why I tell you this, but you are the only person to whom I can speak. It is a relief to mention my forebodings."

"I cannot see how anything very serious could possibly happen," answered Marchand, seating himself in a chair near Pakali and leaning forward so that he could compel her to meet his steady gaze. "There is no danger of any violent clash such as the one which took place when Mr. Dixon was elected governor. The battles will be fought with words, not firearms."

"My fears are vague," Pakali said after a moment's silence. "They have never taken form, but it is as if I watched for a great sorrow."

"Often our worst presentiments precede some period of real happiness," Marchand replied. "You will understand what I mean, however, if I tell you that I am selfish enough to be almost glad because your mental depression has given me the chance to be your confidant, and now I mean to exact a promise on the strength of this evidence of friendship. If any severe trial comes to you, assure me that you will turn to me as to one who is desirous of giving you aid and sympathy."

Pakali would have made an evasive answer, but he took her hand in both of his while he added:

"I mean that I want to be the person upon whom you will depend in time of trouble."

"You have proved yourself so much my friend that I shall not hesitate to exact from you whatever service I may need," Pakali answered slowly.

Their eyes met for a moment, the man striving to read some sign to give him hope of a growing faith and an awakening passion in the woman's heart, but he saw only the shadows that darkened her spirit. Then Marchand remembered that it was near train time, and he went away.

CHAPTER XXVI

HATTAKOWA AT MOMA BINNA

On the eve of the assembling of the Chickasaw legislature, a fortnight later, Hattakowa and his mother dined at Moma Binna. Mrs. Dixon had arranged to occupy, during the legislative session, a cottage owned by Hattakowa, and, while the servants were making it ready, Pakali insisted that the first day should be passed in the house on the hill. Mrs. Dixon and Pakali had had a long talk before the arrival of Hattakowa, who found them and Beaumont waiting on the veranda. Miko, who had made many excursions to the foot of the hill, triumphantly conducted Hattakowa along the broad path from the ledge. As Pakali watched them coming she saw that Hattakowa's appearance had altered greatly since the days when he came often to Moma Binna. His tall, well-knit figure had retained its fine proportions and he walked with his youthful elasticity of step; he had the swinging gait of the Indian. It was his face that told the story of years in which he had been a prey to warring impulses. The outline of cheek and chin had become distinctly racial, and his eyes appeared to be deeper set so that the sockets were strongly marked. As he uncovered his head his glossy black hair fell upon a forehead heavily lined. Hattakowa had been a handsome youth; he was now a man to whom had been given a rare distinction of appearance. Passions, not always subdued, had put their impress upon his features, and yet his experiences had left him with an added strength. When he touched her hand Pakali knew that Hattakowa had built between them a barrier of vagrant acts and thoughts which must forever be hidden in his memory.

" It seems like old times to have you back with us, Hatta-

kowa," Beaumont declared heartily, when they were seated at the table.

"We thought you were going to desert the Territory," Pakali said, and Miko supplemented in his childish treble:

"The Man Looking for the Sun has stayed away from our house a long time."

"How many moons has it been, Miko?" questioned Hattakowa.

But the child shook his head and replied:

"Miko did not count the moons."

"My grandson has not forgotten how to adapt himself to the Indian forms of speech, even though you have neglected the training of our young brave," remarked Beaumont.

"The Little Chieftain and I will resume our nature studies to-morrow," Hattakowa announced, as he placed his hand upon the boy's shoulder. "We have already made arrangements for a fishing trip. We shall spend the day luring the biggest catches from the waters of the Washita."

"And I may take the rod and reel from my bedroom, mayn't I?" asked Miko.

Pakali, remembering the days when Stuart had used the fishing tackle, gave a half-articulate consent, and her hand trembled as she served the "Tom Fuller" from one of the silver dishes. Hattakowa gave no indication that he understood about the rod and reel. He persistently avoided Pakali's glance; he seldom addressed her. After dinner he and Miko stole away, and it was not until the shadows had begun to fall upon the hills that they returned. Beaumont had driven Mrs. Dixon down to her cottage, so Hattakowa found Pakali sitting alone upon the veranda steps. Long ago, on the night when he had given her the first kiss, she had leaned back against the vine-covered pillar in just the same position that she had taken unconsciously this autumn afternoon. In memory again he beheld the girlish face. He

recalled her joyous voice, he heard her laugh, and he saw in her eyes the expectant look of dawning womanhood. Now the sweet face was matured by maternity and moulded by a sorrow which had reshaped the rounded contours of youth. The fierce rebellion that surged through his heart whenever he thought of Pakali's wrongs sent the blood to his head. As he paused, while he gained control of himself, he realised that the years had intensified his longing for vengeance. He had tried protracted absences, but when he returned to his Star Woman it became apparent to him that time had merely stored in him the accumulated resentment he could not conquer.

"The Man Looking for the Sun took me for such a long walk that I wore out my shoe," said Miko, running to his mother to display the broken sole of a much-scuffed shoe. The boy's eyes were sparkling and his face was flushed.

"I see you have been enjoying yourself," Pakali answered, returning the hug which her son gave her. Miko went into the house to find a pair of slippers, and, for the first time in many months, Hattakowa and Pakali met under circumstances that made it impossible to avoid a personal conversation.

"Tell me what you have been doing this half year or more?" It was Pakali who spoke first. With a woman's instinct she sought to put her kinsman at ease.

"I have been trying to forget that I am an Indian and that Aiahnichih-Choyoh is forever beyond my reach," said Hattakowa. "Although I have been much in the white man's cities I cannot learn to pretend, and so, when I come back to you, I must tell you that nowhere in my wanderings could I find the lotus fields."

"We must live in the present and in the future," Pakali answered. "I often feel grateful to Heaven because the sorrows that I have known are behind me. I cannot have just the same griefs again."

"When we live in the future we must have some hope." Hattakowa, leaning forward, as he sat upon the step beside her, rested his face upon his hand, and, as if he were stating a natural condition of mind, he went on: "When I am far away, still you draw my thoughts to you. Often I have said to myself, 'Choctah siah,' and then I have gone forth to the hunt. Yet in field and forest I saw always my Star Woman. Then, yielding to the knowledge that I have the white man's tendencies mingled with the impulses of the savage, I have tried the dissipations of civilisation. I have made myself unworthy to come into your presence. But stronger than all the distractions which cities offer is my craving for your presence."

Pakali's face paled as she listened. With her hands tightly clasped in her lap she waited until Hattakowa had revealed all the tumult of his heart, and when he had ceased to speak she could not find words with which to answer him. Side by side they sat silent while the hills turned purple in the fading light. Tears gathered in Pakali's eyes, and through a mist she saw the glory of the dying day. The consciousness that somehow all her life was wrong pressed in upon her. The love she had wanted had been taken from her, and a love to which she could not open her heart encompassed her. Presently she said:

"Oh, what can I tell you except that time has made no changes which can affect you and me! Dear Hattakowa, I have been thinking that I was attaining a serenity which might make middle age a period of contentment, but you will not let me enjoy even a pretence of peace."

Hattakowa put out his left hand, the hand upon which gleamed the ruby, and, touching her reverently, compelled her to look at him.

"You are right to rebuke me," he said. "My savage instinct makes me want you to suffer with me, even though my love forbids me to hurt you. Pakali, if you knew how

many fierce battles have been fought within me, you would forgive me for so often importuning you in the hope that you may answer the call of my heart. You women learn submission, but I know only rebellion."

Pakali rose to her feet, and, in an agony of emotion, looked up at Hattakowa, who came near her. Before either could speak Miko claimed attention. Running down the steps he paused to glance from his mother to her kinsman. Even to his childish mind it was apparent that their conversation had touched the deeps of feeling.

"Why has The Man Looking for the Sun made my mother sad?" he asked.

"We talked of the sad things of life," Pakali answered, drawing her son to her and pressing his head against her breast. Miko gently freed himself so that he could stand between his mother and Hattakowa while he demanded:

"Why do you not tell my mother pretty stories and amuse her as you do me, Man Looking for the Sun?"

"We are too old to enjoy pretty stories, Little Chieftain," replied Hattakowa, "for even when we tell them to one another they seem sad."

"That is queer," declared Miko, shaking his head. "When you tell me of famous chieftains like Apushmatahah, who fought great battles, and of handsome braves like Ossika, who won the fairest maiden in the tribe, I do not feel like crying."

"Yet every pleasant tale has a sorrowful side." Hattakowa folded his arms over his deep chest, and, looking over Miko's head at Pakali, he said, slowly:

"You are not old enough to understand that every victory means death to the vanquished; that every happy wooing means disappointment for the discarded. Your mother and I have been speaking of one who loved a Star Woman whom he could never reach."

" He was a foolish brave," commented Miko. " I shall love an earth woman."

Silently they stood there for a moment in the fading light, then Hattakowa, touching Miko upon the shoulder, said:

" Come, walk down the hill with me."

Miko hesitated.

" I must not leave my mother when she is sad," he demurred, but Pakali bade him accompany The Man Looking for the Sun.

CHAPTER XXVII

STUART RETURNS TO THE TERRITORY

HATTAKOWA and Miko were returning from the promised fishing trip when they stopped at the railway station. A negro servant was driving the horse attached to the light spring wagon in which they had ridden to the Washita River. It happened that the train from Ardmore arrived while Hattakowa was transacting some business with the station agent. The brief twilight of early autumn had fallen, and, boylike, Miko jumped from the wagon in order that he might have a closer view of the passengers. Several travelling men had alighted upon the platform, when a tall, broad-shouldered man, inclined to stoutness, stepped from the last car. A brakeman put off three or four large leather bags and received a tip. Then the stranger, who wore glasses, looked about for a drayman. The Tishomingo hotel did not send its omnibus to meet the evening train, and Hattakowa's spring wagon was the only vehicle at the platform.

"Is that a baggage wagon?" the stranger inquired of Miko, who had come near to look at the luggage, which had a distinction not characteristic of most of the impedimenta carried by Indian Territory travellers. Miko removed the broad-brimmed hat that had been set on the back of his head, and answered:

"No, it is our spring wagon, which we took out this morning when we went fishing."

The stranger walked down the platform, in a vain search for a cab, and then came back to where Miko was standing.

"How far is the hotel from here?" he asked.

"Quite a walk," Miko replied. "If you wouldn't mind riding with the fish, we could take you with us."

It was still the custom at Moma Binna to greet chance visitors with cordiality, and Miko's grandfather had often given strangers a "lift," so that the offer was quite natural to the boy. The man looked at the child, whose corduroy clothes had at first given the impression that he was the ordinary village lad waiting for passing trains. The traveller saw a face of such unusual beauty and refinement that he asked:

"What is your name?"

"Miko," was the brief reply, as the child lifted one of the bags. He called the servant to carry the others and the stranger was soon made comfortable on the back seat of the wagon. Several minutes elapsed. Still Hattakowa was detained. The stranger took off his stiff hat, for the evening was warm. He had a fair complexion, which showed the flush of heat, and his light hair, grown thin at the temples, was parted near the middle. He was more than commonly good-looking, and his dress told that he was a man of fashion. He had a pleasant manner, which won the confidence of Miko, who was usually reticent.

"Do you live here in Tishomingo?" asked the stranger. The boy answered that he did, adding that he thought it was the best place in all the world.

"You haven't seen the whole world," suggested the traveller.

"I have seen a great deal of it," declared Miko, and the statement was corroborated by the negro servant, who explained: "He's been to Europe and back again, sah."

"Oh." The stranger smiled. "At first I thought you were an Indian," he said, half apologetically.

Miko's eyes flashed.

"I am an Indian," he declared, proudly. "I'm a Chickasaw."

Before Miko had a chance to go into his family history, Hattakowa came to the wagon.

" Man Looking for the Sun, this is a gentleman who came on the train and he couldn't find anybody to take him to the hotel, so I asked him to ride with us," said Miko, turning on his knees in the seat and leaning over the back.

The stranger bowed, and the two men stared at each other in astonishment. The look of surprise on the Indian's face changed to one of such contempt and hatred that the traveller could not conceal his embarrassment. " I gladly accepted the child's offer," he stammered, " because I did not wish to leave my luggage in the station."

Hattakowa bade the servant drive quickly, and, taking his place beside the stranger, he said, without so much as a preliminary word of greeting:

" How dared you come back to the Territory? "

" I came on business." The stranger turned himself in the seat in order to face Hattakowa. " Stop your horses," he said with an assumption of resentment at the curt question. " I desire to walk to the hotel."

" You have no choice but to ride now." Hattakowa spoke in a low tone so that Miko, who had been jolted off his knees, could not hear what was said. " I have the right to ask what sort of business has brought you to Tishomingo. I may compel you to go away on the next train."

" Aren't you rather impetuous, Mr. Dixon? " The speaker drew off his gloves with elaborate carelessness. " I am not aware that you have any right to inquire into my affairs."

" I shall have no difficulty in making you recognise my right, Mr. Stuart," returned Hattakowa. " Before I permit you to get down at the hotel I shall have your word that you do not intend to trouble my kinswoman. I must know that your business has nothing to do with anyone at Moma Binna."

"Were you asking the gentleman to come to Moma Binna?" inquired Miko, pulling himself upon his knees again and casting a friendly glance at the stranger. "My mother will be glad to see you."

In an instant Stuart's face took on a pallor of a sudden fear. He gazed at the boy as if he sought to recognise some feature, but he quickly put away what was an intuitive flash of knowledge. The perspiration stood out upon his forehead. The words he would have said choked him.

"Turn around in your seat." Hattakowa gave the command sternly to Miko, who obeyed with reluctance.

"The boy is your son, I presume," Arnold Stuart said, when he could control his voice. The years had given him much experience in managing men. He had become a lawyer whose fame hung upon his readiness of resource, his easy adaptation of circumstances to his own will.

The wagon rattled around a turn in the road, and Hattakowa waited to answer until his voice could be heard with a distinctness not to be misunderstood.

"Miko is the son of Lenore Beaumont, who was married ten years ago to a treacherous, cowardly white man."

Stuart chose to ignore the insult, because he hoped to escape from a predicament more awkward than any he had feared when he first contemplated a trip to the Territory.

In a few moments since the question of Miko's parentage had come up the white man's mind had tried to grasp the logic of the situation. Stuart had not lost his old habit of rejecting unpleasant suggestions, and, even if his nature had not been evasive, wherever disagreeable facts were concerned, the idea that Miko might be his own child seemed too absurd for consideration. The boy was one of whom any man might be proud. This acknowledgment came to him as he turned to Hattakowa with the desire to retaliate for the Indian's studied affront.

"You have avoided a direct answer," he said, with an assumption of suavity, "but it is evident that you mean me to understand that you are not the father of the boy you call Miko. He is very much of an Indian, and I still see a strong resemblance to you."

Hattakowa raised his hand as if he would have struck the white man, but he controlled himself and with such fierce hatred in his face that Stuart involuntarily shrank from him, he spoke as if he were pronouncing sentence:

"I shall claim from you blood vengeance for this insult to my kinswoman. You have forgotten that the Chickasaws protect the good name of their women."

Arnold Stuart had never been a coward. Indeed, his careless nature had given him a recklessness helpful to him, inasmuch as it often served as a wise audacity. He hastened to apologise now, not so much because he feared Hattakowa's threat, as because he knew that he had been a craven to utter an insinuation against the woman who had given him her love and her life.

"I spoke at random," he declared. "Surely you know that I would not cast any reflection upon——"

"The woman who is your wife." Hattakowa completed the sentence, speaking the words between closed teeth. "We shall take this subject up later," he continued. "Just now I desire you to pledge yourself to attend strictly to whatever business gave you an excuse for returning to the Territory. You must give me your word that you will not try to see Miko's mother."

The wagon had stopped at the hotel. In a conciliatory tone, Stuart said:

"You have the word of a gentleman." He stepped out upon the big stone on the edge of the sidewalk. After a second of uncertainty he leaned over the negro's knees to touch Miko's hand. "Good-night, little man," he said, looking into the child's face.

Father and son gazed at each other for a moment. Some stirring of instinct made each recognise dormant sympathies in the other.

"Good-night," returned Miko. "I hope you will have a pleasant visit in Tishomingo."

CHAPTER XXVIII

MIKO AND HIS NEW FRIEND

AFTER leaving Stuart at the hotel, Hattakowa took Miko to Moma Binna, where they found Pakali watching rather anxiously for them.

"You are late, Miko," said the child's mother. "I try to be a true squaw when my boy goes forth to hunt or to fish, but I find I am beset by a white woman's apprehensions."

Hattakowa forced himself to make a light answer.

"We would have been here sooner if we had not taken a stranger to the hotel," Miko explained. "I found him at the station, and I think The Man Looking for the Sun knew him, for they talked a great deal."

"Who was it?"

Hattakowa had declined to go into the house, and he was standing beside the wagon, from which a servant was unloading the fish. He pretended to be busy disentangling Miko's line, which had not been wound upon the reel. Pakali repeated her question, and he answered, carelessly:

"A traveller from the States." Hattakowa sent the wagon away and walked down the hill. Crossing the bridge, he turned his steps away from the town. He passed several hours alone in the darkness. Before consulting with Beaumont, he desired to think out what would be the most merciful course of action, so far as Pakali was concerned. If it were possible to prevent her from knowing that Stuart was in Tishomingo, she would be spared poignant suffering which might not be less intense than the agonies she endured when she first realised that her husband had deserted her. But the question was how to protect her from the knowledge

of the white man's presence in the Territory. Even though Stuart kept his promise not to seek her, she might encounter him in her morning walks. She often went to the hotel to visit friends, and chance would be likely to bring about some painful meeting. Hattakowa could not think out a plan of action because he could not sustain any train of thought which was not interrupted by the overpowering idea that fate had given him the opportunity to punish Stuart. He was fair enough to know that the white man's insult, spoken at random, touched him the deeper because it suggested that his heart's desire had been gratified in the possession of his Star Woman and the fatherhood of her son. He knew that Stuart had not felt the full significance of the affront, but such an excuse did not absolve the offender from the obligation to pay the penalty.

It was midnight when Hattakowa awoke his mother to ask her advice.

"Oh, my poor girl, my poor girl!" cried Mrs. Dixon. "I have always known that Miko's father would bring more trouble to her. For a month I have read warning signs. Only last week a cricket fled from the hearthstone at Moma Binna, and a whip-poor-will has lingered long in the old ash tree."

"We haven't time to talk of anything but some plan to prevent Pakali from enduring fresh sorrow," Hattakowa answered, gently, and his mother, sitting up in bed with feet crossed and grizzled head resting upon her bony arms, rocked herself to and fro while she tried to control her troubled thoughts.

"Perhaps I could take Pakali to Ardmore," she suggested. "Several new colonies of Mississippi Chickasaws and Choctaws are said to be starving there, and I can persuade her to make the trip if it is represented as an errand of mercy."

"She must go to-morrow morning," Hattakowa declared. "I shall see her father before breakfast, and you must per-

suade her that delay is cruel to the duped Indians who have just been imported into the Territory."

Mrs. Dixon had little trouble in luring Pakali to Ardmore, and, when they found how pitiable was the state of the old men, the women, and children among the helpless colonists, no excuses were needed to convince Pakali that she must stay until conditions were improved. The Indians had been brought in carload lots from Mississippi. The latest arrivals were quartered in a vacant store building on the main street of Ardmore. This building had once represented certain commercial ambitions of the owner. It had an imposing stone front, and space for two stores was divided off on the ground floor. A stairway went up in the middle of the building, and in half a dozen rooms more than one hundred Indians were quartered. Not so much as a bed or a chair was provided for the convenience of the half-civilised men and women, who dwelt in the filthy rooms until camping places could be prepared for them. The most meagre rations of corn meal and bacon were distributed each day.

These Mississippi Chickasaws and Choctaws were examples of racial deterioration. They had been contaminated by contact with low whites; they were ignorant, diseased and unclean. A flush of shame dyed Pakali's cheeks as she greeted the Indians who belonged to her own Nation. Their ancestors had abandoned all aboriginal industries and they had not learned the white man's trades. They wore ragged clothing such as the negroes of Moma Binna would have scorned. The younger women passed their days in idleness while their children were neglected. Babes, infested with vermin, crawled in the streets, and half-naked boys played ball in a vacant lot. Some of these Indians had the misfortune to be among those whose names had been stricken from the rolls because they were not legally entitled to the lands claimed for them by the syndicates. These were in a pitiable plight of poverty, for, as soon as they were declared

ineligible to citizenship, their rations had been withdrawn. With Ogden Maury's assistance, Pakali compelled the syndicate's agent to remove most of the Indians from the building in which they were herded as if they were cattle. Those who had ceased to be of interest to the white land-grabbers were cared for temporarily.

While Pakali was busy in Ardmore, Miko remained in Moma Binna, where one of the teachers and Mammy 'Liza took care of him.

Pennington Creek always had had a fascination for the child, and often he went to play beside the clear waters. At first he had been forbidden to climb upon the big rocks, or to wade in the alluring pool that felt but lightly the force of the waters; but, by and by, Pakali had come to trust his Indian instinct, which combined childish daring with the caution of the natural woodsman. Although she had never permitted herself to go with the boy to the place, she listened often to what he said about making whistles of the twigs from the overhanging willows, and about floating the dogwood blossoms down the stream.

One warm afternoon, when Miko was sailing a raft in the pool, the stranger whom the child had met at the railway station picked his way over the stones and slowly descended the steep bank of the creek. The man paused when he saw the boy, but, after a moment of indecision, went down to the water's edge. Miko guided his raft into a harbour beneath the big boulder. Then he looked up.

"How did you find this place?" he asked, without wasting words in any formal salutation.

"I—I——" the man hesitated; "I thought it would be cool down here by the creek," he answered.

"There's a good seat up on this big rock," Miko said, hospitably, wading toward his newfound friend. "I will take your hand, sir, and steady you if you want to cross on the stones."

Stuart studied the child's face and forgot to make any reply, but Miko took for granted the acceptance of the offer to act as guide. Putting his damp, brown fingers into the stranger's unresisting hand, he led the way to the boulder against which the tall man leaned his heavy body, while he looked down upon his companion. Miko had his mother's eyes, and, when he glanced up at the face of the man, its florid hue grew pale.

"Does your mother know you come here to play?" the stranger asked.

Miko gave an affirmative nod.

"Does she ever come here with you?"

"We often walk by Pennington Creek," the child replied, "but she will not let me bring her here."

"Where is your mother?" The question was asked involuntarily and it had to be repeated, inasmuch as Miko had begun to chase a pollywog. It required an extensive amount of cross-examination to bring out the fact that Pakali had gone to Ardmore to help the Indians, who were starving because wicked white men had been unkind to them. The pollywog escaped and Miko made a brief excursion a few yards down the creek.

When he was left alone Arnold Stuart scanned the shady nook that Pakali had called her place of peace. Here Pennington Creek had taken a broader sweep and worn away a wider course. Some of the willows had been cut, and a new bridge had been thrown across the channel.

On the face of the bank near the boulder Stuart recognised the ledge where Pakali had placed the sticks marking the days of his former sojourning in Tishomingo. A flood of memories swept over him even as the waters poured across a fallen log near the place where he stood. For a moment Pakali in her girlish charm was near him, breaking into bits the branches of dogwood and pointing out the significance of the flowers upon them.

The ledge was filled in with stones, tightly wedged together. He would have obeyed an impulse to open the crevice, but, although he was a man who had outlived the romance of his youth, he could not bring himself to desecrate what had become a shrine commemorative of lost love and ruined faith. With half shut eyes he listened to the music of the waters; he heard again above the sound of the creek the voice of Pakali telling him that, according to the old Indian custom, she arranged a great number of sticks to show that he would be welcome to remain in her village many days.

Stuart had grown accustomed to look upon his love for Pakali and his marriage to her as a piece of youthful folly. In ten years he had lived much and even his most vivid impressions connected with his Indian Territory visit had faded. He was now nearly forty years old, and he had become a man of large affairs, although he had not made the fortune he coveted. The letters in which Beaumont and Pakali had severed all connection with him had aroused his deep resentment. At first the emotion he had dignified as love for Pakali caused him to suffer a certain amount of regret. He had deceived himself into the belief that he would one day go back to claim his wife. In a few weeks the relief that he felt in the situation, which made it unnecessary for him to confess his marriage to his mother and to his friends, became dominant, and he had readjusted himself to his city environment. His mother's social ambitions had soon made him a conspicuous figure in an exclusive clique where Eleanor Dudley was a favourite. His name and Miss Dudley's became so constantly associated that their acquaintances believed them to be engaged. Stuart's sense of justice had caused him to devote himself more and more to his business, in order that he might break off what had become an embarrassing friendship, but fate, in the form of his mother, threw Miss Dudley and him much together. Stuart's easy-going nature yielded readily to whatever temptation prom-

ised pleasure. At the end of five years Miss Dudley, who had denied her hand and fortune to many suitors, held him in a thrall from which he had no desire to escape. Although he had never told her that he was not free to marry, she accepted their rather vague relation without inquiry, because she was one of the class of women to whom marriage means a bondage more or less disagreeable. The last five years, however, had changed Miss Dudley's point of view. She was no longer young, and society had become less fascinating since she could not overlook the fact that she was *passé*.

Eleanor Dudley had become necessary to Stuart's life; her homage had made even his minor political success worth winning. She had supplied a motive more potent than selfish ambition. At the time when the man and the woman faced a crisis in their lives, Stuart had been forced to make this second trip to Indian Territory. The fortune he, whose habits were self-indulgent and extravagant, needed more and more each year, depended upon the success with which he executed his mission. His friend, Elisha Fordham, gave him no opportunity for choice when it was necessary for the syndicate to send an agent to the Chickasaw legislature. Stuart still cherished a belief in a happy-go-lucky destiny; he hoped that his trip to Tishomingo might suggest some excuse for obtaining a divorce from his Indian wife. But chance, which delights in playing queer tricks, had sent the son of whose existence he was unaware, to meet him at the moment he set foot in Tishomingo.

Standing there with his back against the boulder, Stuart's thoughts travelled to and fro over the ten years. The rushing waters seemed to mock him with the steadiness of their onward course. His mind was a whirlpool of doubts and uncertainties. He, who ever avoided disturbing reflections, now confronted his future, which rose before him like one of the blank rocky walls that Pennington Creek had worn so smooth. Stuart had grown into a middle-aged dignity which

was the result of association with successful men rather than the expression of his own mental growth.

Miko, who had stealthily climbed upon the boulder, startled the man, who had passed a most unhappy quarter of an hour.

"You forgot I was here, didn't you?" cried the child, looking down from the place where his mother had sat when she talked to the white man on the first day of their acquaintance.

"I am afraid I shall have difficulty in forgetting you from now on," Stuart answered, and, as he noticed the boy's unusual beauty, the consciousness of fatherhood awoke in him. He reached up and put his hand upon the child's bare, brown knee.

"Your father must be proud of you," he said, with a sudden desire to discover what explanation had been made concerning his own existence.

Miko was on his guard in a moment.

"My grandfather and The Man Looking for the Sun are teaching me to be an Indian the Chickasaw Nation need never be ashamed of," he replied.

"And is your father one of the Non-Progressive Indians who dislike the white men?" Stuart persisted.

Miko cast upon him a rebuking glance.

"I belong to my mother's people," the boy answered, simply, as he slid down from the boulder to a place beside Stuart.

"I should not have asked you so many questions if I had not thought you were a boy worth having," apologised the man.

Father and son looked at each other, and Stuart stooped to put his arm around the child in order to draw Miko nearer, so that he could examine each feature with a curious scrutiny. When he felt the contact with the little body, which was his own flesh and blood, the man forgot what part

Eleanor Dudley had in his life. The shame of his disloyalty to the child's mother put a fever into his veins. He pushed Miko's black hair away from the broad brow and gently stroked the childish cheek. In the chin he saw the faint dimple which gave his own face a charm the Indian despises. As if he read the thought that took special cognisance of the childish chin, Miko said:

"I am to be so strong and brave that no Chickasaw will know I have a dimple in my chin."

"What is your name, my boy?" As the father asked this question of his son he felt a jealous fear lest the answer should show that all trace of his own relationship had been ignored.

"My name is Miko Stuart," replied the child.

"Miko has a pleasant sound. What does it mean?"

"My grandfather calls me Push-Kush-Miko—The Little Chieftain," explained the boy; "but I was baptised Arnold Stuart, which is my father's name."

The man tightened his embrace and then put the boy from him. Trembling, Stuart leaned against the boulder. Presently he found himself staring at the walled-in crevice.

"Do you see that place where the stones are wedged in the rock?" he asked, and Miko ran to it. In the springtime mosses had overgrown Pakali's shrine of love, but now they were dried and falling away. Obeying the iconoclastic instinct of boyhood, Miko began to tear away the stones.

"Here are a lot of little sticks all in a row," he announced; and Stuart, looking over his shoulder, saw the broken branches from which all the withered flowers had fallen.

CHAPTER XXIX

HATTAKOWA AND STUART

ARNOLD STUART passed an uncomfortable night after his interview with Miko. For the first time in all his life he felt an apprehension of impending trouble. This feeling was one quite apart from his disturbed condition of mind caused by the discovery of the existence of his child. Fordham had already realised immense returns from his Indian Territory enterprises, and he demonstrated a plan by which Stuart could obtain possession of land enough to make the hazards of the trip to Tishomingo appear insignificant. Stuart's faith in his luck which, according to his theory, enabled him to do whatever seemed most pleasant and most profitable, had led him to marry Pakali. He had enjoyed a brief period of happiness, and he had escaped all immediate consequences of his cowardly course of action. It had seemed easier to take the risk of confronting Beaumont and Hattakowa than it would be to decline an opportunity to acquire valuable property. The possibility of obtaining the right to marry Eleanor Dudley had presented more alluring pictures for the future than the continuance of his present position as the discarded husband of an Indian woman. His encounter with Hattakowa had been disturbing, because it had put him on the defensive, and made him appear at a disadvantage. He was not a coward, and he gave hardly more than a second thought to Hattakowa's threat. Miko had touched the deeps in him. The child born of the best love that could come into his life, because it was love spontaneous and devoid of mercenary motives, embodied the sacred aspirations of two souls untouched by the sordid impulses of life. He

longed to claim Miko before the world, and then, remembering Pakali's dismissal, he knew that such a claim would be the crowning indignity of his pusillanimous conduct toward his wife.

It was no wonder that when Mr. Billy Brown found Stuart at breakfast, in the hotel dining room, he noticed an apathetic attitude concerning the bills to be forced through the legislature. Brown had grown heavier and coarser with the passing years, and the black moustache that he twisted frequently was streaked with grey. The banker had arrived on the early train from Wauchula. He had brought with him a most encouraging report of what had been accomplished in handling the Progressive Indians, who were now in the majority in both houses.

"We've got the Federal Government back of us," said Brown, after he had outlined the plan of procedure agreed upon with the elder Mattison. "There isn't any reason why we should not make the fullbloods do just about as we want them to." He helped himself to an orange, which he peeled while he waited for Stuart's answer.

"Anything you do will be all right," declared Elisha Fordham's confidential agent, whose tone was indifferent. After a little pause he inquired:

"Has our syndicate done much harm to the Chickasaws who know enough to take care of their lands?"

"Of course it has," admitted Billy Brown, not without some pride in his diplomatic achievements.

Stuart polished his glasses, and, avoiding his companion's glance, replied:

"I have no compunctions about acquiring property from the fullbloods, who would get rid of it to someone, but I must confess that I dislike the idea of defrauding the educated people of the Nation."

"It's rather late to have qualms of conscience," commented the banker. "I am told you've been the lawyer that

has guided the syndicate for ten years. If it hadn't been for you none of us might have thought of bringing in those Mississippi Chickasaws and Choctaws."

The accusation caused Stuart to wince, and Billy Brown, seeing his advantage, went on:

"There's one rich halfbreed here who has spent thousands of dollars fighting for the rights of the Indians, but we always beat him at every turn. He is an intelligent old fellow named Beaumont, and he has a daughter who is a beauty. She helps him spend his money in schools and schemes intended to improve the condition of the red man."

With trembling hands, Stuart put down the cup of coffee he had raised to his lips.

"I believe I've heard of the Beaumonts," he said.

"The daughter isn't called 'Beaumont' any more," explained Brown. "She was married ten years ago to a white man, who deserted her. By the way, his name was Stuart, the same as yours. The wedding took place before I came to the Territory, but it has always seemed strange to me that any man would repent of marrying such a woman as Mrs. Stuart."

It was evident that the banker had no suspicion that the syndicate's agent could be Pakali's husband, for he spoke with the manner of a person who retails a well-known piece of gossip. Stuart pushed away his plate, and hurriedly left the table.

Arnold Stuart was too clever a lobbyist to let his presence in Tishomingo be publicly associated with the schemes of the land syndicate. He had taken care to give out the information that he was the attorney for a company holding a mineral lease. He pretended that he came to the Chickasaw capital to look over certain records. He remained in his room during the daily sessions of the legislature, and there the Mattisons and Billy Brown went to report to him. On this particular day Billy Brown returned late in the after-

noon with the announcement that Joseph Dixon had made trouble in the lower house.

"Dixon can't do much, though," averred the banker, "for we have most of the Senate on our side. Beaumont and Sands know it isn't worth while to make any fuss, and old John Oaktree is practically helpless, because he has to speak through an interpreter."

Gee-Haw Blikens hung around the hotel the greater part of the day. After losing his farming machinery and live stock through his deal with the banker, he had become a bitter enemy of Billy Brown. He took care that Hattakowa and Beaumont should hear of the conferences with the stranger in the hotel.

A week passed without the occurrence of any incident of a disturbing character and Stuart regained his mental balance. With minute interest he followed each day's proceedings of the Chickasaw Legislature, and when he was assured that the syndicate's most important bills would pass with little opposition, his usual complacency returned to him. At the time when he felt most composed, however, he had a brief conversation with Hattakowa which unnerved him for twenty-four hours. Stuart was standing in the arched entrance of the hotel one evening when Hattakowa approached him, with the evident intention of demanding an interview. There was no chance to escape the Indian, who said:

"When are you going away from Tishomingo? Your work with the legislature is about completed, and it seems unnecessary for me to suggest that you would better not remain after you are assured there is no danger your thieving plans can miscarry."

Stuart's anger blazed up.

"I am not so fond of staying among savages as to remain longer than necessary," he retorted; "but I do not acknowledge your right to inquire into my affairs."

"We have discussed that question before," replied Hatta-

kowa. "I have the right, whether you acknowledge it or not. I have not interfered with your nefarious schemes because I want to delay the day of reckoning until I can measure the exact debt of vengeance I owe you."

The two men stood for a moment looking at each other, as if each would read what the future held. Again there seemed to come to Stuart the prescience of ill, not altogether explainable in the Indian's reference to the day when they would balance their accounts with each other.

Stuart loved life, since it meant to him an opportunity to enjoy in a gentlemanly way all the pleasures that civilisation offers. He had dabbled in politics because it added zest to his professional experiences and helped him to become conspicuous as a legal practitioner. Now that he was likely to obtain enough money to make possible the indulgence of costly recreation, he could look forward to years of luxurious existence.

His fears took the form of dread lest in some manner the fortune within his grasp might slip from him. Hattakowa, standing there before him, in appearance was so far from the Indian that it seemed absurd to imagine that he could resort to physical violence in order to achieve any vengeful purpose. He was too much civilised to shoot a man in the back, and at the worst he was likely to do harm through some legislative *coup d'état*. Even this suggestion Stuart dismissed as absurd, when he remembered Brown's assurance that the Progressive party was in control of the Chickasaw government.

"We might as well reach an understanding now," the white man said, carelessly lighting a cigar. "Has it occurred to you that you might attribute to me many evil designs of which I am innocent?"

"The fact that you have dared to return to the Territory is enough to prove that you are absolutely without any feeling of regret for your conduct toward my kinswoman,"

Hattakowa answered. "You have demonstrated that you are devoid of the commonest human feeling, since, after discovering the existence of your son, you have continued to carry out the plan by which you will complete the work of robbing him, as well as other members of our Nation."

Stuart grew pale beneath Hattokowa's contemptuous glance.

"You forget one thing," he said. "Mr. Beaumont and his daughter forbade my return."

"You had neglected your wife for months. The pride of the Indian could not endure such treatment. George Beaumont intended to come with me to-night, for he has certain things to say to you, but he is unable to leave Moma Binna because he is helpless from a sudden attack of rheumatism. In his name, as well as my own, I command you to leave Tishomingo to-morrow."

"I cannot go to-morrow," Stuart answered, in a defiant tone, as he flicked the ashes from his cigar.

Hattakowa looked at him between half-closed eyes, then, suddenly turning upon his heel, the Indian walked down the street.

CHAPTER XXX

A CHANCE MEETING

STUART lingered in Tishomingo for several days after Hattakowa had commanded him to leave the Territory. Brown had presented promising opportunities for investment, and, now that he felt the greed for wealth, Stuart was willing to take any chances which offered quick returns in money. He had signed a mineral lease on what promised to be a valuable coal mining property, and this new venture detained him in Tishomingo over Sunday, inasmuch as he wished to meet Brown and the elder Mattison at South McAlester the next day.

After dinner, Sunday, Stuart, who had nothing better to do, drove toward a strip of woodland. The autumn afternoon was warm and he let the horse go slowly, without caring whither the road led. He thought with relief that within a week he would be back in Chicago, where he could forget everything concerning the Indian Territory, except the lands that he would acquire.

A turn in the road brought into view two horses tied to a fence. It was not until he was within a few yards of them that Stuart saw their owners, and recognised Miko and someone who must be the child's mother. The woman was sitting with her back against a tree, so that Stuart could catch but a glimpse of a light grey habit and a broad-brimmed hat. He might have turned back even after Miko called loudly, " Good-evening."

The child ran out into the road, and the woman, rising to her feet, turned toward him a face in which there came a gradual perception that the hour she had dreaded for years

had come to her. She stood in much the same attitude that the man remembered when she had smiled at him from among the yellow sunflowers, but now the light was gone from her eyes, which looked at him with a fascination that held his gaze, while her dark skin took on a livid hue. It would have been merciful for Stuart to drive on, but he had never denied himself the gratification of any whim, and now, without counting the consequences, he stepped from the buggy, leaving the spiritless livery horse standing in the middle of the road.

"I did not mean to give you the pain of seeing me, Pakali," said Stuart, pronouncing his wife's name with hesitation.

He stood before her as if he were a distorted image of her girlhood ideal. His figure had the heavy solidity of a well-fed middle age. The expression of his face had changed. In youth the eyes behind the glasses had been quite wide open and the mouth had had a pleasant upward curve, while the cleft chin had been well molded. Now the ease-loving man of the world betrayed his nature in his countenance. Self-indulgence was written in every line marking eyes and mouth. Nevertheless, Stuart was still handsome, for he had escaped grossness. As Pakali looked at him she noticed every alteration of outline and expression made by time.

"Why did you come back to Tishomingo?" she asked, with a tremor in her voice.

"I came on business," he answered. "I have been here some time."

Miko, who had been examining the livery horse, heard his mother's question, and, after Stuart had answered it, he explained:

"Mother, dear, this is the gentleman The Man Looking for the Sun and I met at the station the day we went fishing."

" Since then I have seen Miko on the street many times," said Stuart, " and we passed one afternoon together down by Pennington Creek."

" Why did no one tell me you were here? " Pakali questioned, with a rush of feeling.

" The Man Looking for the Sun told you we met a stranger at the station. You have forgotten that we carried the traveller to the hotel." As he spoke Miko slipped his arm through his mother's, and, seeing the agitation in her face, he cast a questioning glance at the stranger.

" Miko, will you ride over to the Blikens ranch without me? " asked the child's mother. " You can do the errand as well as I, and I will talk to this gentleman until you come back."

Miko obeyed with visible reluctance, and, when he had gone, Pakali said:

" All these ten years I have known that some day we must come face to face again. I have thought of what I desired to make you understand, but now that we are again in the very place where the old grapevine once grew, I do not know how to speak." She pressed her hand to her bosom as she made an effort to control her emotion. " I have always wanted you to know that, even if you had obeyed a sense of duty, I could not have dwelt under your roof. If love could not open the gates of your city, I am glad they were barred against me."

Stuart went several steps nearer to her, but she put out her hand, as if to command him to keep at a distance.

" You must know that I have tried to understand just why you repented of our marriage, and now that I am older it is all plain to me. I have been afraid you might imagine I have judged you harshly, but I have tried to be just to you."

As she spoke there was such majesty in her bearing, such sublime submission to the facts of her life shone in her face,

that Stuart was awestricken. For a moment his self-respect fell away from him and he beheld himself stripped of all the best attributes of manhood. He had eased his conscience by sophistries which seemed to justify his acceptance of Pakali's dismissal, after his long months of neglect; now he realised that he had won a love of which he had been utterly unworthy. In Pakali's presence he felt again the fascination of her personality. Her beauty, matured and softened, took hold of his senses.

"You did not let me know why I was summoned back to Tishomingo. Why was I not informed when the child was born?" he inquired.

"If you could not heed the call of love, why should I have played upon your sympathies? You knew I was ill, and you did not come to me." Pakali spoke calmly, for she had gained command of her emotions.

"I was a weak, cruel, selfish boy then, even though I was of man's age," answered Stuart. "I have no explanation to offer. What reparation can I make except to do something for our son?"

In Pakali's eyes blazed a sudden fire.

"Miko is mine, all mine now," declared the boy's mother. "I have bought him with the price of pain and loneliness, agony and despair. As soon as I knew that you did not love me enough to hasten to my side, when my heart cried out for you, I hoped you would never know that a son had been given to me. I have looked upon Miko as a compensation for the loss of your love."

"Pakali, you didn't lose my love; I loved you as much as I could love any woman," faltered Stuart.

"Yes, I believe you did," Pakali answered; "you loved me as much as you could. Perhaps the white man does not know the love that is greater than all things else in the world; perhaps civilisation puts wealth and ambition and social station before love."

" I cannot bear your reproaches. Can you not forgive me and let me have a chance to retrieve myself in your eyes? " the man pleaded.

" I have not meant to reproach you," Pakali's voice softened, and pity came into her eyes as she looked at her husband. " There was a time when I would have reminded you of all the promises of love which you made to me, but that time has gone by. Your pledges have been like all the pledges the white man has made to my people. You have broken faith with me, and I am enough of an Indian to hold that memory always."

The golden haze of the afternoon had deepened. The man and the woman stood there in the silence of the sunset hour as their thoughts bridged the years and travelled back and forth above the ruins of their youthful hopes.

" I might yet win your respect, Pakali," Stuart said. He had been standing with his head uncovered and now he threw aside his hat in order that he might take both her hands in his. She would have prevented him from touching her, but something of his old influence compelled her to be passive.

" It is not too late for you to come away with me to my city," he said. " Let me take you and Miko. I can change my life; I can adjust it to your needs. I am not such a contemptible man as you think me, and you can bring out all the good that is in my nature. I have tried to forget you; I have even thought I could marry another woman, but, since I first looked upon my own child, I have known it would be worth while to live for my son and my son's mother."

" Do you think you could erase all the memories of those ten years, and restore the faith I gave you long ago? " asked Pakali, looking at her husband through her tears. The touch of his hand stirred in her the quick response that in

the old days his caresses had always called forth. While the tears blurred her sight she saw again the youth whom she had loved.

The man was quick to notice the advantage he had gained. He would have drawn her closer to him, but she freed herself, and, with arms outstretched against the tree around which the old grapevine had once entwined its tendrils, hid her face while she wept as only a strong woman can weep when her emotions gain the mastery over her.

Stuart waited until the storm of feeling had subsided. He dared not touch her again, for she had waved him away with a gesture so imperious he could not but obey it. He passed a miserable five minutes, in which the thought of Eleanor Dudley came to mock at him. Again he had tried to do a thing that tempted him momentarily because Pakali and Miko would be presentable in his world. Even though his son was marked by an Indian ancestry, he was a handsome boy, with a strong individuality and a bright mind.

"I thought I could never be hurt by you again. I believed you had lost the power to make me suffer," Pakali said presently. "You have dwelt as a guest in the house of my heart ever since you ceased to be the lover welcomed there. I have held you as one who must be ever part of my thoughts, even though you could never again play upon my emotions. You are not the man I loved ten years ago, and I am not the woman whom you promised to care for until death should part us. My tears are for the lost Pakali, who was young; the Pakali who was shut out from your city. You and I must face the future with the wisdom that experience has brought to us. If you want your freedom, you shall have it. I have often wished for the courage to give it to you. I exact no penalties except what is, perhaps, the greatest of all—that you shall never let Miko know you

are his father. Is he not mine by every right? For whatever wrong you have ever done me, I would have him make recompense by growing to be in sympathy an Indian who shall work for the uplifting of his persecuted people. Through my agonies there may be wrought out an atonement for some of the injustice the white man has done the Indian."

In the fervour with which she uttered her aspirations for her son Pakali carried to her husband the conviction that he had forfeited forever all claim upon her and Miko. He, who seldom was thwarted in any wish, was unnerved by his humiliation, yet the logic of circumstances was clear to him. His plea for reinstatement in Pakali's respect could not be anything but futile.

"It is likely we shall never see each other again," Stuart said, slowly, after a painful silence, "and I should like to feel that, as time goes by, you will try to remember only whatever good you found in me when you believed me to be worthy to marry you. The wrong I did you was the result of weakness; it was not intentional. I put off the announcement of our marriage; then, after my return to Chicago, I delayed the going back for you until my accumulated faults became a barrier that separated us. If I had known about the child I could not have refused to hasten to you. All these years I have tried to retain my self-respect by making myself believe that you and your father were to blame for too hasty action."

"If you had loved me as I loved you, you would have come to make explanations. You would have forgotten every other consideration except the duty you owed your wife, a duty that should not have been a galling load," Pakali answered. "Ah, you bartered love for the world's good opinion; you sacrificed me to the gods that your civilisation has set up for the white man to worship." Something of the bitterness that springs in the heart of every sensitive

woman who has suffered, overflowed as Pakali remembered the rebellion against which she fought in the first days of her misery. She was standing with clenched hands and with face turned away from her husband, for when she looked at him she saw vaguely the Arnold Stuart whom she had loved when she was a girl.

"I did betray your faith; I did break every vow I made to you," confessed Stuart. "There must be some way by which I can make reparation."

"You do not understand a woman's nature or you would not imagine it possible to repair such an injury as that from which I have suffered." Pakali drew a long breath, as if the pain in her heart stifled her. "Can you bring back faith, and love, and hope? Is there any magic by which you can restore my youth? For ten years I have been denied all the sweet inspiration of love, and I am grown to be a woman quite different from the one who would have developed under natural conditions. Only in my dreams have I the home that is my right, and there dwell the sons and daughters that might have been mine." She was looking toward him now, but it was as if she did not see him, and she was transfigured by the vision of her lost happiness. She was silent for a moment. Then she went on: "I do not mean to accuse you; I speak because it is right that you should know the power that men have to make women wretched. I want you to leave this place before Miko comes back, so I shall say good-bye now. You go away with my forgiveness, though memory cannot be blotted out."

Stuart would have touched her hand, but she drew away from him.

"Go back to your city," she said, gently. "The gates are barred forever against the Indian woman."

Stuart gazed at her as she stood there in the majesty with which her sorrow clothed her. A sense of aloofness made him dumb when he would have uttered a last plea in justifi-

cation of himself. With bowed head he walked toward the carriage, but he retraced his steps, and, standing near her, said:

"Pakali, when you are trying to forgive me, will you teach Miko that his unknown father is not altogether bad?"

"I have taught my son that you are only forgetful of his mother," was the answer.

Pakali stood motionless there by the road for a long time, after she was left alone. She was sitting upon a log when Miko returned from the Blikens ranch with Hattakowa, whom he had met riding toward Tishomingo. Miko had told Hattakowa that the stranger was with his mother, and the Indian had spurred his horse into its best speed. When he found Pakali alone she had partially regained her composure. She rose and walked unsteadily toward her horse, in order that she might have an excuse for turning her back upon Hattawoka, from whose anxious glances she shrank.

"Mother, where is the gentleman who stopped to talk with you?" asked Miko. "I wanted to see him again, for he said he liked me."

Hattakowa's face hardened and his brows met in a scowl, but he pressed his lips together, while he waited for the answer to Miko's question.

"He drove back to town," said Pakali, whose hand trembled so that she could not undo her horse's bridle, which she had tied to the fence. Hattakowa, who had been quick to offer assistance, unknotted the reins, and put Pakali into her saddle. The three horses were urged into a gallop, and, with Miko far ahead, Hattakowa and Pakali rode back to Tishomingo. They had reached Moma Binna before Hattakowa spoke of what was uppermost in his mind.

"Forgive me for not telling you that Arnold Stuart was in the Territory," he said, when Pakali had wearily ascended the steps of the veranda. "He promised me he would not

seek an interview with you, but I might have known that he would not keep his word."

"It was a chance meeting," Pakali replied. "I know you meant to save me from the pain of seeing"—she hesitated —"my husband, after all these years, but I am glad that I had the chance to tell him how I have felt about his forgetfulness of me."

Hattakowa had too much delicacy to ask a question voicing his desire to know how they had parted, and he waited in the hope that Pakali would add some word of explanation, but, suddenly overcome by her emotions, she hastily entered the house.

CHAPTER XXXI

THE PRICE OF FORGETFULNESS

Arnold Stuart left Tishomingo the day after he met Pakali by the roadside. With a sense of relief he piled his luggage into one of the cars which belonged to the evening train. He had passed through a period of intense perturbation. All his life he had felt resentment whenever he was compelled to suffer mental or physical distress. Pakali's personality haunted him. Her beauty, tragic in its racial distinctiveness, which was softened by the strain of Caucasian blood, had flowered even through sad experiences, and, while he knew that, if she had accepted his impulsive offer to make reparation for past neglect, he would not be happy, yet he disliked the idea that he had lost a woman who would have done credit to his discriminating taste. His mind was in such a chaotic condition that he could not think connectedly. It seemed as if all his affairs had become so entangled that they could never be straightened out.

It is a human instinct for all who err to seek self-justification, but the sophistries which were usually a balm to Stuart's conscience did not avail to restore his equilibrium. All the good in him had been momentarily awakened, but, even while he felt anew the fascination which Pakali exerted over him, and even though he coveted the possession of his son, he knew that it would be impossible to readjust his life. One thought comforted him—wealth would give him the means of escaping taunting memories. Out of the fortune he hoped to obtain through the syndicate, he would make provision for Miko, even though the child's mother would inherit wealth. This idea helped to mend the tattered vestment of his self-respect. He would make a complete confession to

Eleanor Dudley. She would give him the ready sympathy which had drawn him to her even when he had thought to break off their long friendship. She would be the one woman who could understand. Perhaps she had guessed why he had not asked her to marry him; she might suggest some way of solving the problem of his future.

While he was thinking, as, with hat drawn over his eyes, he sat in the corner of the car seat, the train bumped along for several miles over a rough roadbed. He did not notice a short stop at a flag station, where a man who paused to look at Stuart's head and shoulders outlined against the dusty window-pane, entered the first coach, which happened to be a combination baggage and smoking car, where he sat in the dim light, which but partly revealed his form.

There were many delays, which Stuart endured with but scant patience. Once he walked through the smoking compartment, passing the man without even glancing at the vague figure. At last the train reached the station where it was necessary to change cars for South McAlester. Several negroes and Texas cowboys crowded ahead of Stuart, whose luggage was taken off by two brakemen. As the train was starting the man who had been sitting upon a trunk jumped to the platform.

The late moon was rising, and Stuart, standing among his travelling bags, looked up to recognise Hattakowa. The appearance of the Indian gave the white man a foreboding which made him shiver involuntarily. Stuart was quick of resource, and, facing Hattakowa, he said:

"I did not notice you on the train, Mr. Dixon."

"I took care that you should not see me," answered Hattakowa, "lest you might desire to put off our hour of reckoning."

"What do you mean?" inquired Stuart, whose hasty glance showed him that he and Hattakowa would soon be the only ones left at the isolated station. The negroes and

the cowboys had quickly disappeared and the sleepy agent was locking his inside office. Two hours must pass before the South McAlester train would come in, and Stuart realised that he had been entrapped at a place where he could not escape from whatever reckoning Hattakowa chose to demand of him.

"You and I have many scores to settle," declare Hattakowa. "I have given you a long respite, and now you must answer to me for the wrong you did my kinswoman ten years ago; for the insult to her you uttered the night you arrived in Tishomingo, when you insinuated that her son was mine; and for the breaking of your promise not to disturb her peace by seeking an interview while you were in Tishomingo."

A cloud that obscured the face of the moon was slowly swept away by the night wind, and the ghastly pallor on Stuart's face was revealed to his enemy. Life was sweet to the white man, and it was worth while to parry death. Until that hour Hattakowa's threats had been indefinite and therefore not alarming. The Indian had appeared far too civilised to commit murder, but here, late in the night, at a lonely railroad junction, it was possible that Hattakowa had come to take blood vengeance.

"Mr. Dixon, you have the right to resent the wrong I have done my wife," Stuart said, in a propitiatory tone; but the fact that he referred to Pakali as his wife added fuel to Hattakowa's anger. "If I could make amends, I would do so, yet if I gave up my life it would not make your kinswoman any happier. I did not seek the interview with Pakali, but I used the chance meeting as an opportunity to offer all the reparation in my power. I would have taken her and our son back to Chicago with me."

"So you condescended to invite Pakali and her child to live under your roof where you could find new ways of showing your indifference to them," retorted Hattakowa. "How

dared you think yourself worthy to associate with the woman who is unfortunate enough to bear your name?" The Indian looked at the white man with such contempt that Stuart's pale face flushed beneath his gaze.

"What amends do you exact from me?" Stuart asked after a moment's silence. "I made the only offer that a man in my position could make. What more can you expect?"

Hattakowa stooped to open a small leather handbag from which he took two revolvers. As the Indian raised himself Stuart saw a gleam of metal and understood that the Indian demanded blood vengeance and nothing less. He stood paralysed for a moment. With the full realisation that he had come face to face with death, Stuart waited while Hattakowa examined the firearms.

"The Indian despises the white man's duel," said Hattakowa. "It is the red man's custom to hunt his foe as he hunts the wild beast in the forest, but I am not so much a savage that I will not give you a chance to defend yourself. Here, take this revolver, and at fifteen paces we will settle our differences."

"I decline to take part in a shooting affray," Stuart declared in a husky voice. "If you came here to murder me you must not expect me to help you escape from hanging by giving you the chance to make the plea of self-defence."

As he spoke he looked around in the vain hope that some chance passerby might come to his rescue. He stifled a cry for help which came to his lips, for he knew that his voice could not be heard in the nearest house. Although he was a man of courage he was not brave enough to contemplate the surrender of life without feeling the fear of death. The world held him by the strongest interests. An impulse of self-protection made him turn quickly and run to the end of the platform, but Hattakowa overtook him, and, gripping him by the shoulder, forced one of the revolvers into his right hand.

"You cannot save yourself," the Indian said, quietly. "I shall shoot you in the back if you are such a coward as to run away. I have waited until now, for I could not kill you in Tishomingo where Pakali and Miko might look upon your dead face." He glanced at his watch. "I will give you ten minutes in which to write any notes that you may think important in case your business affairs, including your interests in the lands you have helped to steal from the Indians, may have to be settled by some of your friends."

Holding the revolver in his nerveless grasp, Stuart answered:

"If I must die there is no reason for waiting ten minutes, unless I may be able to argue with you concerning my right to live."

"Words will be of no avail; your deeds have given you the right to die instead of the right to live," answered Hattakowa. "The ten minutes begin now."

He counted off the fifteen paces and stood with folded arms while Stuart waited miserably for his small chance of escaping the shot of his enemy. As if it were a panorama spread out before him the white man saw his whole life. Already he seemed to be looking back upon it from the vantage ground of eternity. The scenes revealed in that hour were pleasant to look upon, and yet, turning from the past to the future, he beheld the promise of days that made existence of two-fold value to him. Involuntarily he pressed his left hand to his eyes while for a few seconds he persuaded himself that he was dreaming, but when he looked ahead of him he saw Hattakowa watching him with the quiet patience which was a last refinement of cruelty. It seemed as if an hour had passed when he saw down the track the headlight of an engine. Hope rose in his breast, but he held himself immovable lest Hattakowa should know that he looked for help from the coming train. Brighter and brighter shone the headlight; nearer and nearer came the sound of the car

wheels. Stuart held his breath as with drawn face he looked toward the engine, but hope died when its speed did not slacken. He was dazzled by a flood of light as the train swept on.

"We have five minutes more," announced Hattakowa. Something in the Indian's voice reminded the white man of the night when they had first met. Again Stuart saw Pakali. Once more he was young. The joy of living possessed him; he could not lose it. Each year brought him new pleasures, yet he was standing now before a man who would rob him of life and its possibilities. The instinct of self-preservation told him to make one supreme effort to escape Hattakowa's blood vengeance. He rushed at the Indian and had gripped his right hand when Hattakowa, who was much the stronger of the two, threw him off and commanded him to take his place. In desperation Stuart fired at his enemy but the ball whizzed above the Indian's head.

Hattakowa sprang upon Stuart and wrenched the revolver from his grasp.

"For the last time you have exercised the white man's privilege of dealing unfairly with the Indian," declared Hattakowa, "but I still give you a chance for your life." He put Stuart in position; then he examined both the revolvers, and, retaining the one which Stuart had fired, he gave the other to his opponent.

"One! Two! Three! Four!" Hattakowa counted; and the ball from Stuart's revolver grazed his forehead. "Five!" Hattakowa shot with a sure aim; he meant to hit the heart that had been untrue to Pakali. Stuart staggered, and fell forward upon his face.

Hattakowa went to the white man's side, and, turning him over, raised his head. Stuart drew a long breath as if he sighed to leave the pleasant world. His eyes closed. Hattakowa knew that he was dead.

CHAPTER XXXII

BEHIND STONE WALLS

THERE was still more than an hour before the coming of the train for which Stuart had been waiting when Hattakowa awoke the station agent, who was dozing in the main room of the one-storied, slab-covered building that bore the ambitious name of "Hotel."

"I want you to send some telegrams for me," he said calmly. Going to an ink-stained deal table he wrote several messages, one of which was addressed to the United States marshal at Ardmore. A number of men had been attracted to the station by the sound of the shots. There had been a time when shooting affairs had been too common in the Territory to arouse more than casual notice, but the lawless period had passed, and, when it was known that Hattakowa had killed a white man, the settlers at the junction manifested much excitement.

Through the night Hattakowa remained outside the hotel. He had bound the wound on his forehead with a handkerchief, and, as he sat in the darkness, he became conscious of the nervous reaction which follows intense excitement. He had obtained the blood vengeance of which he had dreamed for ten years, but he felt none of the elation the Indian experiences when he has vanquished his enemy. Stuart's reluctance to give up life left Hattakowa with a haunting memory of the handsome, pale face, the symmetrically proportioned body, and the well-modulated voice of the white man.

Stuart had deserved death, and Hattakowa was willing to give up his own life in order to compel the white man to pay

the penalty for his misdeeds. The Indian knew that there would be no mercy for him when the Federal Court passed judgment for exacting blood vengeance from a white man who had had influential political friends. He could not understand the white man's fear of losing life, but he shrank from the ignominious death of a felon. He knew that his trial would bring out many facts concerning the causes which led up to the night's tragedy. Through him publicity might be given concerning the many frauds of which the authorities at Washington were ignorant. He had thought he would be willing to suffer the ordeal of trial in the Federal Courts if, without bringing Pakali into notoriety, he could expose conditions that were a reproach to the United States.

Pakali! His thoughts always came back to Pakali. He could not guess how her husband's death would affect her, but he knew that he had cut himself off from her forever since her woman's heart would remind her that the dead man was the father of her son. He loved Miko, and he wondered whether the child could be kept in ignorance of the fact that The Man Looking for the Sun had murdered his father.

The savage in Hattakowa had exacted the life of his enemy; now the influence of his Caucasian ancestry dominated him for a brief time. The last ten years had taught him that the Indian could not obtain any recompense for his wrongs; he had taken the law into his own hands, and, beyond the regret that he had caused Pakali added suffering, he had no concern about the consequences of his deed. Without his Star Woman life meant nothing to him, yet the man who had won her had put her aside because he had found many distracting interests in his world. Hattakowa could not comprehend Stuart's attitude toward life.

As the hours dragged by, now and then he thought he felt the dead man's hands clasping his wrist; the winds repeated Stuart's last sigh as he gave up life. In the dull grey of the

early morning the men carried into the hotel a stretcher covered with a dark blanket. Hattakowa glanced at it indifferently, for the thing they carried was no longer his enemy.

The United States marshal came on an early train and Hattakowa surrendered himself. At noon, after a coroner's jury had rendered a verdict declaring that Arnold Stuart had come to his death by the hand of Joseph Dixon, Hattakowa went back to Ardmore with the Federal officer.

The news that Hattakowa had killed a white man had spread rapidly, and at the station the Indian saw the faces of many of his friends. Foremost among them was Judge Maury, who had come to Ardmore from Wauchula to attend court.

" This is a bad business, a bad business! " said the Judge, pressing close to Hattakowa. " I've been to see whether I could get you out on bail, but there is no help for it; you will have to be locked up."

The three Federal prisons of the Territory long had been a reproach to a civilised country. The jail situated in Ardmore was one of the sights which tourists declared reminded them of stories of mediæval times. It was in the centre of the town, and thither Hattakowa was driven in what is called a " hack " everywhere west of the Mississippi River. Upon a sixteen-foot wall of masonry two armed guards paced back and forth all day and all night. An iron-barred door opened into this wall and gave entrance to a long, narrow enclosure. A whitewashed wooden shack occupied the centre of the jail yard, leaving a narrow passageway on each side, and a place ten or twelve feet long at each end. In the wooden shack, which was divided into two rooms, slept and ate two hundred prisoners. The Southern race prejudice compelled the division of space so that the negroes could be separated from the whites and Indians. At night, when filthy mattresses were spread upon the floor of the shack,

there was hardly room enough for the men to crowd under shelter, even though they lay in closely-packed rows. Absolutely no sanitary provisions were made for the helpless prisoners who, each morning, rolled up their vermin-infested bedding before they ate the meagre breakfast, which was placed upon the dirty floor, tin plates being distributed among the men as they sat with legs drawn under them. Hattakowa had often climbed the narrow stairs which led to the wall and thence looked down upon the miserable occupants of the enclosure. All summer the southern sun poured down upon the whitewashed roof and walls, and, after the welcome rain came to the relief of the gasping prisoners, the water stood in puddles that moistened the accumulated filth of months.

When Hattakowa and Judge Maury entered the jail enclosure on this day after the killing of Stuart, their presence was hardly noticed, inasmuch as visitors were not uncommon, but, after Hattakowa was left alone, and it became plain that the man whose wealth and prominence had made him known everywhere in the Nation was confined with them, the prisoners made overtures of friendship. Furtively they glanced at the wound upon the newcomer's forehead, but they took no notice of it even when fresh bleeding made necessary the adjustment of a bandage. Hattakowa, who had seated himself upon one of the long benches built against the wall, made no answer in return to adroit questions intended to give him an opportunity for telling why he was there among those who had broken Federal laws. Three or four halfbreeds and two fullbloods, all of whom knew Hattakowa, gathered around him and, concealing whatever curiosity they might have, began to talk of the allotment and of other subjects interesting to the Chickasaws.

Hattakowa had not been in jail an hour before he was conscious that several persons were gazing at him from the wall. He recognised Billy Brown and Cole Mattison, who

were staring at him with evident enjoyment of the situation. His choler rose, and, with the wish that he might have dealt with them as he had dealt with Arnold Stuart, he rose from the bench and went inside the whitewashed shack. Here the air was stifling. Fifty men were lying upon the floor, some of them napping, others smoking.

Night came on. From a place on the bench against the wall Hattakowa watched the bedtime preparations. The jailer had given him a mattress more unclean than most of the others he had noticed, but, even when warned that the signal for quiet would be given in five minutes, the latest arrival at the Ardmore jail made no effort to find a place for his bed. Instead, he obtained permission to remain on the bench all night.

With his head resting upon his hands Hattakowa gazed upward at the stars and forgot that he was a prisoner, except now and then when the figures of the guards crossed his vision as they passed to and fro upon the wall. In the freedom of the forest he had often lain upon the ground whence he could look up to the heavens, and now he saw between him and the skies the face of his Star Woman, who looked upon him accusingly. He glanced at his watch, and, at the hour when Stuart had given up life, Hattakowa tried to rejoice because he had obtained the blood vengeance. A light wind sweeping over the walls of the prison seemed to bring to him his victim's last sigh.

Hattakowa rose to his feet and would have paced the narrow passageway, but he remembered that he dared not disturb his fellow prisoners. He lay down again; his body burned with a fever; his throat was parched. Removing his shoes, he softly crept to the big barrel that contained the tepid rain water provided for drinking purposes. The odour of rotting wood nauseated him as he dipped a cupful of the stagnant water. He went back to the bench to dream of Pennington Creek, coolly flowing over the smooth boulders.

Long ago its clear pools had mirrored Pakali's face and his own as they leaned over to read their future from the coloured pebbles. Once as they looked into the limpid depths of the stream, Pakali had cried that she saw blood in the place where Hattakowa rested his right hand. Laughingly he had shown her how the red sandstone was reflected through the water. Now the ill omen had been fulfilled. While his thoughts taunted him in a hundred ways, Hattakowa scornfully told himself that the Indian should have no qualms about killing a foe, and he reasoned that the white blood in him had made him too tender-hearted. Stuart had but paid the right penalty for his ignoble deeds.

After all, it was only because of Pakali that Hattakowa permitted himself to review the incidents of the preceding night. He would have to forfeit his life as the price of his blood vengeance, and surely that was a fair exchange, one which would ease even the conscience of a white man. In the dim, leaden light, just before dawn, all the hideous details of the prison revealed themselves with an added look of squalor. Hattakowa wondered how long he would be compelled to stay there, and whether Pakali would let him say good-bye to her before he died. Then he remembered his mother, whose heart must be breaking over his plight.

In the early morning the prisoners' activities diverted Hattakowa's thoughts from himself. The two hundred men had a system of self-government. A code of strict laws was enforced by a kangaroo court, and severe punishments were inflicted for any infraction of its rules. The prisoners took turns in cleaning the shack and in sweeping the jail yard.

Breakfast was brought in several hours after the rising time. This meal consisted of hunks of fried mush, simmering in grease. When the jailer offered Hattakowa his share of the rations the Indian contemptuously declined to accept the coarse fare. A liberal bribe enabled him to have a trayful

of palatable food sent in from Ardmore's leading hotel. Of this Hattakowa ate but little. When Judge Maury visited him the Indian's first care was to make arrangements for a feast of meat and vegetables for all his comrades in trouble. By ordering this from the man who was making three hundred per cent. profit on his contract to feed the prisoners, Hattakowa knew that no objections would be offered. Judge Maury made but a brief call, for he was evidently too much upset by the killing of Stuart to outline a plan of defence. He remarked that he would wait for Beaumont and Sands, whom he expected on the noon train.

"You didn't sleep much, I reckon," said the Judge, as, with a silk handkerchief he dusted a place on the bench beside Hattakowa. After he had seated himself he silently stared for a time at one of his gaitered feet.

"Somehow I never thought you would kill Arnold Stuart," he said, presently, "but it was an affair of honour, and, from the standpoint of a Southern gentleman, I must say that you did just right. It's a wonder you waited so long."

"If I had killed him in Tishomingo, Pakali never afterward would have been contented in the town she has always loved," explained Hattakowa. "I wanted to spare her as much as I could."

"That was well, that was well," agreed the Judge, "and I warrant he was afraid to die."

"He loved life," commented Hattakowa.

Judge Maury glanced at Hattakowa's forehead, which bore the mark of the bullet Stuart had fired in his last frenzied attempt to save himself.

"He tried to take advantage of you, didn't he?" asked the old lawyer.

"He did not wait until I had counted five," said Hattakowa, carelessly.

"That wound, even though it be slight, can be made to

avail much in your favour when you are tried," asserted Judge Maury.

"I desire to make no defence," Hattakowa declared. "For ten years I waited for the chance to kill the white man who had wronged Pakali. I cannot expose my kinswoman's sorrows to save myself."

"You talk as if you were a madman!" exclaimed the Judge, who went off in a dignified huff.

In the afternoon Judge Maury returned to the jail with Beaumont and Sands. Pakali's father looked pitifully bent and aged, and, owing to a recent attack of rheumatism, he walked with difficulty. He sank heavily upon the wall bench before he spoke to Hattakowa, who had come forward to meet him. Then he looked up to say:

"Hattakowa, I wish you could have been less the Indian. After all these years we might have let Arnold Stuart live out his allotted time. The Little Mother's religion taught me to remember the words, 'Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.'" The old man's face had become so deeply furrowed that the scar upon his cheek appeared to be but one of his many wrinkles; he had lost flesh, and showed an extreme feebleness of movement.

"If Stuart had not come back to Tishomingo; if he had not helped to rob every person in the Nation; if he had not dared even to cast an insinuation upon your daughter's name —I would have spared him for betraying the trust you had given him," Hattakowa answered, with the old hate blazing in his eyes. "Now I have set Pakali free. Her living sorrow, turned to the dignity of a grief for the dead, may bring her something like serenity after I have given my life for the life I have taken."

"You shall not give your life for Arnold Stuart's," interposed Sands. "You had a just provocation, and no jury will convict you."

"It was a premeditated murder and I am ready to take

the punishment for it." Hattakowa made the statement in a decided voice and Judge Maury caught him by the arm.

"Hush! How dare you speak so recklessly!" he said, as his florid face turned purple with excitement. "I mean to defend you as I have never defended man before."

"I don't want any defence," Hattakowa answered. "If it were not for my mother I should rejoice over the fact that death is near to me."

"You seem to have lost all trace of common sense, Hattakowa!" exclaimed Sands. "You have done a service to the whole Nation by making an example of Arnold Stuart. I am Indian enough to wish that you had killed the whole syndicate. If Elisha Fordham had died ten years ago the Chickasaws might have escaped wholesale robbery."

"I thought you were reconciled, Sands, to the fact that we must be victims of progress," said Beaumont, shaking his head rebukingly.

"The Indian in me rebels often," Sands answered. He drew Judge Maury aside to confer with him, and Hattakowa took advantage of the opportunity to ask Beaumont about Pakali.

"She is overcome by the horror of it all," Beaumont answered. "She mourns for the man she loved ten years ago, and even reproaches herself for some of the words she spoke to him the day before he died. She grieves, Hattakowa, because his blood is upon your hand."

"Pakali may live to understand that I have been her liberator," Hattakowa answered, slowly. "It is a galling trouble to me that she and my mother must suffer for what I have done, but my mother is so much an Indian that she will not blame me."

"You have been to me all that a son could be," Beaumont said, rising and putting his wrinkled brown hands upon Hattakowa's shoulders. "You have brought a great sorrow to me."

"Yet, when Pakali suffered in the months before Miko was born, did you not desire blood vengeance?" The younger Indian asked the question in a respectful tone, and Beaumont answered:

"The Little Mother's religion restrained me, but I will confess I was often tempted to kill the man who betrayed my daughter's faith."

CHAPTER XXXIII

THE WAY OF A WOMAN

PAKALI'S chance meeting with her husband had stirred every emotion which she long had tried to repress. She went back to Moma Binna with a feeling that she had been face to face with the ghost of all her lost hopes. Arnold Stuart's voice recalled the words of love he had spoken when she was a girl; the touch of his hand made every nerve vibrate. After she had shut the door of her little room she rebuked herself for having spoken accusingly to the man who was the father of her child. The mother love, which enters into every love a true woman harbours in her heart, went out to the white man with a rush of pity for his weakness. Although her reason assured her that it was too late for her to enter the white man's city, still she tormented herself with remorseful thoughts. After all, his had been a great temptation, and the white man could not know how much the Indian could love. For hours the world seemed blank to her, but Miko's voice calling at her door reminded her that she had been given a definite object in life—the training of her child to be a better man than the father who had dishonoured her by his neglect and indifference. She opened the door, and in the dusk of the evening saw her son's head outlined against the grey of the sky as he stood upon the porch. The head was like his father's. Pakali turned to the table upon which stood one of her mother's water-lily candelabra, and, striking a light, drew Miko to a place where she could study his features while she listened as he told her that Gee-Haw Blikens had brought him a pair of guinea pigs.

The greatest tragedies are interwoven with the commonest

incidents of life; perhaps that is why the human mind is able to bear its most poignant griefs. Sinking into a low chair Pakali waited while Miko described the fine points of his newly-acquired pets. The cleft chin and the full under lip were like Stuart's, and yet they lacked the weakness of the white man's features. Impulsively Pakali put out her arms to embrace Miko, who stopped his narrative long enough to kiss her.

"There, mother, dear, now you will come out to see the guinea pigs, won't you?" coaxed the boy.

Pakali shook her head and Miko noticed that her face was sad.

"You have been so quiet ever since you saw that stranger to-day," he said. "I hope he did not hurt your feelings. I almost thought you had been crying when The Man Looking for the Sun and I came back to you."

"Don't worry about mother," Pakali answered, with a faint smile.

"I can't help thinking the stranger must be a bad man," observed Miko, leaning his elbows upon the table and resting his chin in his hands. "He made The Man Looking for the Sun very angry that night I invited him to ride in our wagon, and you are unhappy after you have talked with him. But he was kind to me the day he came down to the big boulder where I was playing."

"What big boulder, Miko?" Pakali had leaned back in her low rocking-chair, which was drawn so that she was in the shadow of a high screen.

"The one down in Pennington Creek in the place where you will never go with me."

"Did he find you there?" cried Pakali with an accent which startled Miko so that he left the table and went to lean against her knee.

"We talked a long time there," the boy said, "and, oh, mother, he pointed out a big crack in the rock where someone

had put in a lot of little stones, and I pulled out the stones. You cannot guess what I found!"

Pakali gripped the child's arm and waited breathlessly for him to continue his story, but he would not say another word until she had guessed that perhaps an old bird's nest, or a horse shoe had been concealed in the rock.

"No, no." Miko shook his head. "It was just a row of little sticks, and the stranger took one look at them and then went away."

Pakali rose hastily. She walked to the window, where she remained until she could control her agitation enough to send Miko away upon an errand.

The next night when she put Miko to bed in the room that for such a brief time had been his father's, she stepped to the dressing table beside which through all the years had hung the spurs once the property of Stuart. These she removed, and, rolling them in the canvas hunting suit, which had been allowed to remain in the closet, she went out into the living room. The boy's father had come and gone without being recognised. The time had arrived when she must remove from Moma Binna all that reminded her of Arnold Stuart. She had thought he might return, but he had not come near the house where she had lived alone, dreaming of him, longing for him, mourning for him. A feeling of resentment took possession of her as she realised for the first time that her husband had returned to Tishomingo on a quest which in no way concerned her except so far as she was a part of the Chickasaw Nation. He had even carelessly promised not to seek her. This thought touched her pride.

Pakali went to bed early, but she could not sleep. Toward midnight, when half dozing, something aroused her. She thought Stuart spoke her name, and it was as if he walked through the door into Miko's room. Her dream made such a vivid impression upon her that, slipping out of bed and throwing a dressing-gown around her, she went to Miko, who

was sleeping in the happy unconsciousness of childhood's slumber. She kissed the boy's cheek. As she moved away from his bed her eyes fell upon the armchair and the stool in the bay window. An irresistible impulse caused her to sink upon the stool, and, stretching out her arms so that they rested upon the chair, she hid her face in the cushioned seat.

"Suppose I should forget to come back to my Chickasaw wife," she heard Stuart say in a bantering tone, just as he had spoken on the day he left her.

The breeze moved the window curtains, and Pakali raised her head. She felt her husband's presence for a moment; she thought she saw his face wearing a look of such fear that the handsome features were distorted. She put out her hand as if she would touch him, and then the vision was withdrawn. Involuntarily she spoke his name. The wind stirred the curtain again and she knew that she was alone. She stood there trembling until Miko, laughing in a pleasant dream, broke the spell that was upon her.

An hour after breakfast the next morning when Pakali, listless and exhausted, was reclining in an easy chair on the veranda at Moma Binna, Beaumont told her as briefly and as kindly as possible, that Hattakowa had killed Arnold Stuart. For a few moments the whole world was blotted out. When she came back to consciousness someone was bathing her head, and Miko, pale and big eyed, was rubbing her hand. Beaumont lifted his daughter in his arms and carried her into her bedroom.

"Be brave, little girl," he whispered, arranging her pillow for her and stroking her head, just as he had done when she was a child. "I don't know what to say, but if the Little Mother were here she could remind you of some Divine promise that would give you comfort."

"I know you are grieving over Hattakowa," Pakali answered, "and I am the cause of all this terrible trouble."

"You must not be morbid," her father admonished. "We

are all but puppets in the hand of fate. Hattakowa has assumed the primitive man's right to punish a transgressor. Don't judge him too harshly."

All day Pakali lay in a darkened chamber. At first she felt only the horror that the knowledge of Stuart's death brought her. He had died in the very prime of life because Hattakowa sought vengeance for her wrongs. Although she was an Indian she had never harboured bitter resentment against her husband. She had mourned over her lost love. After all, Stuart's greatest fault had been his weakness. The white man's civilisation corroded the human heart; it set up golden idols in the shrines where love should be worshipped. Stuart's shortcoming was the result of his education. Before the greed of gold and the lust for power had taken hold of him; before he had bowed down to the social Moloch which exacted the sacrifice of love and duty to selfish aspiration, he had come to her, and she would remember him as he was in the days marked by the flowering branches of the dogwood.

So Pakali wept for the Arnold Stuart to whom she had opened the door of her heart. She remembered how he had come back to her after he had ridden away without her promise to be his wife. Through all the ten years unconsciously she had waited for his return. Whenever a horseman rode up the hill she had felt a quickened heartbeat, even though her reason rebuked her for clinging to a futile hope. At night often she had dreamed that he called to her, and, until in reality he had come to her there in the road near the place where the old grapevine once grew, she had been ready to answer his summons, even though as time went by she came to understand that their paths lay forever apart.

For her father's sake Pakali used all the self-control that she could command. Within a week, as if no tragedy had touched her, she had taken up her life at Moma Binna. To Miko she preserved the calmness that gave the boy an abiding

trust in her strength, thus enabling her to control him without difficulty. In these days she managed never to be alone except at night.

Day after day passed and no one mentioned Hattakowa's name in her presence. She had been so much preoccupied with her own sorrow that she did not notice this strange reticence until one evening when Miko thoughtlessly said in response to a question: "The Man Looking for the Sun told me." The child put his hand to his mouth, and, looking at his mother made quick apology.

"Grandfather told me not to talk of The Man Looking for the Sun and I forgot. Mother, where is he? Why mustn't I talk of him?"

"You must obey your grandfather without questioning his commands," answered Pakali.

Beaumont had gone to Ardmore that day and Pakali waited for the late train in order to ask him about Hattakowa. Now it flashed upon her that he might be in prison. Poor Hattakowa! It was for her sake that he had hated Stuart with a twofold intensity. To avenge her wrongs he had killed her husband. For the first time she comprehended that she had not drained the cup of sorrow, since Hattakowa might be compelled to pay the extreme penalty in exchange for the blood vengeance he had exacted.

She was distraught by this new terror, and, after Miko was safe in bed, she went down the hill to wait on the bridge for her father. In the darkness of the early night the waters of Pennington looked black. The voice of the creek was hushed by long, dry days which had drunk so copiously from pool and channel that all the falls and ripples were stilled in their onward flow. "As long as water runs" she had promised to love Stuart, but now the waters were black in the darkness, as black as the pall that covered him who had become but a sorrowful memory. Once the waters had been red upon Hattakowa's hand. The recollection caused Pakali

to grasp the bridge railing in order to steady herself. The sound of wheels announced Beaumont's coming.

"Are you too tired to walk up the hill?" Pakali asked, after she had stopped her father's carriage.

"I am very weary," replied Beaumont. "It would be much easier for you to ride with me."

Pakali climbed into the seat beside her father and waited impatiently until they could be alone together.

"Father, I want to ask about Hattakowa," she said, detaining Beaumont, who would have gone into the house. "I know you have been trying to spare me all knowledge that may disturb me, but I am strong enough to bear anything now."

"Hattakowa gave himself up to the officers of the law. He is in the Ardmore jail." Beaumont gave the information grudgingly.

"You have seen him to-day, haven't you?" Pakali asked.

"Yes."

"Is he sorry for what he has done?"

"Only so far as it makes you and his mother suffer."

"Aunt Totopehah!" Pakali exclaimed. "How selfish I have been! Why have I not gone to comfort her?" Pakali put her arms about her father's neck. "I have acted as if I were the only one troubled, and you have been grieving as much as anyone. Forgive me, dear, for being so unmindful of you."

"There, there, don't bother about me." Beaumont laid a big hand upon his daughter's shoulder. "Don't bother about me, but give Hattakowa some measure of sympathy. He believes that he has separated himself from you forever, but we must remember that he acted under great provocation, and that he defended the honour of his kinswoman."

"My honour?" questioned Pakali, drawing away from her father. "What do you mean?"

" Arnold Stuart cast an insinuation upon the parentage of Miko," Beaumont answered in a stern voice. " He spoke his taunting words the night he arrived in Tishomingo. I had meant not to tell you, but you owe justice to the living, and Heaven knows Hattakowa's death may not be far off. So be as kind as you can to him."

CHAPTER XXXIV

MARCHAND OFFERS AID

INDIAN TERRITORY had been the scene of many tragedies, but for a decade none had attracted more than passing notice from the newspapers of the United States until the story of how Arnold Stuart had met his death at the hand of a Chickasaw was chronicled far and near. The Chicago journals gave many columns to the sensational discovery that the lawyer, politician, and club man, who was supposed to be one of the most eligible bachelors in society, had lost his life because he had incurred the resentment of an Indian by marrying and deserting a woman of one of the Five Nations. Illustrations, added to large type, gave prominence to what soon became a celebrated case. In all the pictures the artists freely indulged their imaginations and represented Hattakowa as a brave who wore a war bonnet and carried a tomahawk. Stuart's connection with Elisha Fordham, who, since he had ceased to be a Member of Congress still remained a conspicuous figure in national politics, drew the attention of Federal authorities to his slayer. Long editorials, which reviewed the crimes and cruelties of the American Indians, declared that speedy punishment should be administered to the savage murderer.

Many of the newspapers reached Hattakowa, who chafed under weeks of confinement in the jail of Ardmore. He read the accounts of what had been labelled, " The assassination of a white tourist in Indian Territory," and he echoed the hope that there would be no unnecessary delay in punishing the slayer. As the days passed life in the jail became almost unendurable. The place was infested by vermin; foul odours permeated the air, and there was no such thing

as privacy. The close contact with persons of every degree of degeneracy was sickening to a man who had lived close to nature.

Mrs. Dixon was a daily visitor at the jail. Her fortitude proved her to be worthy of her Chickasaw and Choctaw traditions. She had taught Hattakowa the significance of blood vengeance as it was demanded by his ancestors. From the day when, as a little child, he had seen the miracle which transformed a wounded eagle that beat its wings against the ground into a motionless mass of shining feathers, Hattakowa had been schooled to look upon death with a reverence for its mystery and a scorn for whatever superstitions made men fear it. After Mrs. Dixon had told him that she was proud to know he had defended the honour of Pakali, the mother and son never discussed Hattakowa's position as a prisoner. They ignored every subject which turned upon the great fact that Hattakowa's life was in jeopardy.

It was more than a month before Pakali's name was mentioned. Then one day Mrs. Dixon took to the prison a long letter from Pakali, who told her Aunt Totopehah how much Hattakowa had been to her, and how deeply she grieved because for her sake he had done a desperate deed.

"She seems to understand why I could not let Stuart live," said Hattakowa, putting the letter into his coat pocket. "I have wanted to write to her, but, even though a letter from me might be received with charity, I have not the power to put upon paper what I would say. I was never ready with the pen, you know, mother."

"Time will put you right in Pakali's eyes," Mrs. Dixon answered with conviction.

And so Hattakowa was content to wait.

Late one afternoon, when Hattakowa was pacing up and down the narrow alley between the wall and the prison shack, Philip Marchand came to see him. After the iron gate had closed behind him, Marchand said:

" Mr. Dixon, you will not misunderstand me when I tell you that no one in the world can comprehend as I do your desire to call Arnold Stuart to account."

The two men looked at each other. The delicate, handsome face of the white man was pale and the Indian knew that he was labouring under mental stress.

" You are the last person in the world to sound the depths of an Indian's wild nature," Hattakowa answered brusquely, as he looked at the well-groomed figure which confronted him. Marchand typified the extreme refinement bred of generations of wealth and culture. He was essentially masculine, but his physical strength had the quality produced by scientific training. While Hattakowa had the large frame and big muscles which had been developed by an outdoor life, Marchand's body was that of the college athlete. Each man was a good specimen of his type.

With flushed face Marchand waited a moment before he replied to Hattakowa. Weighing his words, he said:

" I do not pretend to sound the depths of your nature, Mr. Dixon, but I do believe that I comprehend the ruling motives of your life. I know the feeling which compelled you to kill Arnold Stuart. I have come to offer you whatever service I can render."

The light of a new knowledge burst upon Hattakowa, and for a moment he was blinded by the discovery that Marchand loved Pakali. His first impulse was one of resentment because another white man had presumed to look with longing eyes upon his Star Woman. Almost roughly he said:

" I do not need your help, Mr. Marchand."

" It is true, you do not need my help," was the reply. " You have many friends who will do all in their power to obtain a just judgment for a righteous act. It is I who need your friendship, for you can teach me to deserve to be counted as worthy of the trust of the Chickasaws."

Hattakowa made no answer. He had looked upon Philip

Marchand as a careless, light-hearted youth who had not yet acquired the hereditary vices of the white man. Now he beheld him as a lover who raised longing eyes to Pakali. Abruptly the prisoner dismissed his caller, but Marchand went away with the assurance that he would return the next morning.

All that night Hattakowa lay upon the wall bench looking up at the stars. He had always been a fatalist, but now he was forced to learn that, by his acts, man weaves the web of his own destiny. By staining his hands in blood he had given Pakali liberty; he had freed her from the marriage bonds that held her to Arnold Stuart. He had been willing to pay the supreme price for the blood vengeance which he had coveted through the ten years of his mature manhood, but Marchand had brought to him the realisation that after he had given up his own life Pakali's liberty might mean happiness to a white man. This idea was insupportable. Only one comforting thought came to him as he tried to look into the future—the Indian woman loved but once. If Pakali could be won, would not his own worship have availed something? He had trusted Marchand because the Kentuckian was young, and now again a white man had betrayed his faith. The old hatred for the race which had persecuted the red man burned in his heart through the night, but when the dawn came Hattakowa remembered that Pakali would live long after he had met death. He must become accustomed to think of his own life as ended, since in a little time he must pay the price of the blood vengeance he had taken. As he had suffered in loving Pakali, could he not feel sympathy for Marchand? But there still surged in him a vigorous life, and intense emotions swayed him. He was a man, not one of the saints that Pakali's religion taught her to venerate. "Pakali, Pakali!" His spirit cried out for Aiahnichih-Choyoh. Until the end he could dream of her. Perhaps when he was gone she would need a friend like

Philip Marchand; she and Miko might miss their kinsman. He would try to be just to the white man. He would probe Marchand's character and strive to find him worthy of Pakali's trust.

The next day when Marchand went to the prison Hattakowa's mood had changed. The Kentuckian found that all friendly overtures were accepted in the spirit that prompted them. The two men talked a long time about the preliminary hearing which was to take place that afternoon, and Marchand announced that he would like to accompany Hattakowa to the court house.

CHAPTER XXXV

THE LAW'S DELAYS

In Indian Territory at this period the law's delays were longer than in any other part of the United States. Hattakowa's preliminary hearing had been postponed from time to time because Elisha Fordham had influence enough to have the case held until a certain date when a Chicago lawyer could be present. On the day of the hearing Ardmore was crowded with white men whose curiosity brought them to the town, and with Indians whose sympathy caused them to assemble near the jail. The United States marshal called out the Indian police, and the main streets were patrolled by mounted men.

The court room was crowded, although admission had been limited to persons who had some special claim to places in the hall of justice. Mrs. Dixon, severe in her stern composure, occupied a front seat with Mrs. Maury. Judge Maury, with his assistant counsel, sat at one of the tables, and next to him was the district attorney, half hidden behind a pile of law books. Two court reporters sharpened their pencils and waited listlessly. The Judge, a handsome, grey-haired man, took his place upon the bench, and Hattakowa, accompanied by Beaumont, Sands, Marchand, and the jailer, entered the court room.

Hattakowa had lost flesh in the weeks of his imprisonment, but after his night's vigil he carried himself with a repose which was less forbidding than his usual hauteur. He had the air of a man who has nothing to fear, and he showed little interest in any of the proceedings until the Chicago lawyer arrogated to himself the privilege of speaking upon

the subject of Arnold Stuart's unsullied reputation in the business world. Although Judge Maury raised numerous objections, judicial courtesy permitted the attorney from the States to indulge in a lengthy harangue which brought out a demonstration from Billy Brown and his clique of followers. Judge Maury had given instructions to Hattakowa to plead not guilty, but when the prisoner at the bar was called upon to answer to the charge of murder, he slowly rose to his feet, scanned the faces in the court room, and answered in steady tones:

"For just cause I killed Arnold Stuart."

"Do you plead guilty, or not guilty?" he was asked.

Judge Maury rose from his seat, and, leaning upon the table before him, tried to attract Hattakowa's attention, but the prisoner purposely looked away from him.

"I desire to plead guilty," was the answer.

Judge Maury fell back in his chair. There was a stir in the crowd. Mrs. Dixon sat immovable.

The hearing was adjourned and Hattakowa was sent back to the prison, after Beaumont, Sands, and all his friends had accused him of foolhardiness in declining to take advantage of every legal expedient. Judge Maury, who sat with his head in his hands, made no attempt to move from his chair until the court room was almost empty.

"Your client didn't leave us much to do," said the Chicago lawyer with a laugh.

"Perhaps he knew that it would be useless to make a fight against the prejudices of the white man's courts of justice," replied Judge Maury.

Ogden Maury, who had gone over to the prison with Hattakowa, returned to his father.

"It won't do any good to be upset, dad," he declared, putting his arm through the Judge's.

"I declare, I feel as weak as if I'd had a sunstroke!" exclaimed the old lawyer. "We might have saved him, but

now he's spoiled his case. He is afraid of bringing the Beaumonts into notoriety, and, although I promised to protect Mrs. Stuart, he would not take any chances. Still, I had no idea that he would plead guilty."

"Can't you make him change his plea?" suggested Ogden. "Come, cheer up, dad."

Dreary days followed. A week of summer heat came as a surprise in the autumn and the prison was a place of torment. Strong men became seriously ill; one of the Indians died. The meagre rations were so unpalatable that the two hundred prisoners were reduced to the starving point; the water in the cask was so warm that no one could drink it. Maddened by hunger and thirst the prisoners quarrelled with one another. They came to hate the guards who paced back and forth upon the walls. Little groups of conspirators planned reckless acts which no one had the courage to carry out because physical strength had been reduced by famine.

In this period Hattakowa had much to think of inasmuch as the date of his trial had been put forward on the court calendar in order that the Chicago attorney might be spared a second visit to the Territory. After the preliminary hearing Judge Maury had gone back to Wauchula for a short time, leaving Beaumont and Sands in Ardmore. Every morning the two old Indians visited Hattakowa, who gradually persuaded them that it would have been cowardly for him to plead not guilty, and, at the end of a week, they were discussing the white man's penalty for blood vengeance.

"The Chicago lawyer and the district attorney will try to make a record in this case," asserted Sands. "It is attracting national attention, and if they compel the Indian to pay the extreme penalty provided by law they will earn the commendation of Elisha Fordham and other politicians who are interested in the land-grabbing schemes connected with the Territory."

" Even though you had taken advantage of every means of defence you would be convicted of murder in the first degree, Hattakowa," declared Beaumont.

" I can accept the death sentence philosophically," said Hattakowa, " but I shrink from the rope because hanging is such an ignominious manner of ending life."

" We must deliver you from that humiliation," said Sands, in the steady, guttural voice that carried with it the assurance of power. " I have been thinking out a plan by which, if you must die, you can die as befits a Chickasaw."

" What do you mean? "

" Our Nation can demand the right to carry out whatever sentence is passed upon Hattakowa. It is true he has killed a white man, and therefore must accept Federal justice as it is meted out to the Indian, but we could argue that, since Arnold Stuart was married to a Chickasaw woman, we are entitled to the privilege of dealing with the convicted prisoner according to our own customs."

" Do you think they would let me be shot? " asked Hattakowa.

" I believe that if we wait until sentence is passed upon you we can have you given into our custody after we have pledged ourselves to inflict the death penalty," answered Sands.

" You have given me a hope that takes away the last vestige of regret which my position causes me," exclaimed Hattakowa, standing with his head lifted up and his shoulders thrown back as if he felt renewed vitality. His drooping body had shown the listlessness and weariness long confinement lends to the spirit. Now he was suddenly embued with the confidence that by his death he might yet bring help to his people.

" I have been reluctant to die before I could be of service to the Nation," Hattakowa confessed; " and, as I have lain

here looking up at the sky night after night, I have longed for just one month of freedom."

"Ah, my boy, what could you do from moon to moon?" inquired Beaumont, unconsciously assuming the paternal tone he had used when Hattakowa was a child.

"Let the Chickasaws give a pledge for me and I will attempt a mission that may make my life seem not altogether worthless," promised Hattakowa, as he looked from one furrowed face to the other. In his eyes was the light of a lofty determination.

"Well, we can do nothing until after the trial," commented Sands.

All that day Hattakowa was unconscious of his surroundings, and at sunset, when Marchand came to see him, he declared that the young Kentuckian had answered an inarticulate summons.

"You offered to help me," said Hattakowa when he had made Marchand sit close to him upon the bench. "Did you mean what you said enough to devote your entire time to my affairs until"—he hesitated a moment and then finished, gravely—"until I set forth into the world of shadows?"

Marchand answered in the affirmative, and the Indian knew that he was sincere.

"I want you to give up your work with the Dawes Commission," Hattakowa began.

"I resigned more than two weeks ago," answered Marchand. "I could not longer endure assisting at the labour of land allotment."

"That is good," said Hattakowa. "I believe you were sent to aid me. Will you accept the management of my ranch, and incidentally take charge of all that concerns me? My business must be settled up with Judge Maury's assistance, and I must be aided to make real a dream which comes to me night after night when I am shut within these walls."

Marchand was too much surprised to answer immediately.

" You shall become my partner," said Hattakowa, as if to give Marchand assurance of financial support.

" Believe me, the money consideration did not cause me to hesitate," Marchand replied. " An uncertainty concerning my capabilities makes me slow to accept your offer."

" I know what your business capabilities are. If you do not mind staying at the ranch near Tishomingo we can easily come to an agreement," said the Indian.

" Nothing would please me better than a ranch," asserted Marchand. " Remember, I am a Kentuckian with a Kentuckian's love for the outdoor life, and the Kentuckian's appreciation of fine horses."

They talked for a long time. Marchand remained in Ardmore several days, and when he left the town he went to Hattakowa's ranch.

CHAPTER XXXVI

MIKO ASKS QUESTIONS

As the weeks passed Pakali devoted more and more time to the school at Moma Binna and she watched Miko with the fear that someone would tell him the story of how his father had been killed by Hattakowa. The first few weeks she made excuses for keeping him away from his classmates, but when he passed the first day after his return to school without learning anything about the tragedy which touched the inmates of Moma Binna, she gradually relaxed her vigilance, although she could not dismiss from her mind the dread of some chance enlightenment. Beaumont went often to Ardmore, but between father and daughter there was a guarded silence concerning his trips. With a heavy heart Pakali saw that her father was becoming more and more bowed under the weight of trouble that he bore. To her had come a merciful reaction after the first intense agony of grief over Stuart's terrible death. She had suffered until she had experienced the uttermost pang, then, with a sense of doubled pain, she took up the daily task that she had set for herself. As time went by she thought more and more of Hattakowa. Her father's plea that she would judge him mercifully had its effect. Although she seldom spoke of her kinsman she kept herself informed concerning him. When she heard that he had deliberately pleaded guilty at the preliminary hearing, the horror of his possible fate overwhelmed her. He was so splendidly alive; he had such strength, such magnificent vitality, that the possibility of his life being taken from him came to her with a distinct meaning quite apart from her personal interest in him. George Beaumont was too honest a man to offer sympathy in the form of false hopes for his

final escape from punishment. He counselled Pakali to summon to her aid all the patience and courage that was hers by right of heritage from her Chickasaw ancestry, and, for her father's sake, she tried to make no sign of her suffering.

The day of Hattakowa's trial came and in a state of feverish excitement Pakali went about her morning tasks. In the afternoon she took Miko for a walk upon one of the hills. At a place where a group of fir trees clung to the rocks she rested while the boy hunted squirrel's nests. It was a grey day. In the stillness of the woods she unconsciously listened for voices she could not hear. Long ago, when she had stolen away to weep over Stuart's absence, Hattakowa had found her retreat. Even while she thought of that evening she imagined that the tread of a horse stirred the dead leaves in the road below her. She had missed Hattakowa often since he had ceased to be her frequent companion; she knew that his love had glorified her, even though she had rejected it. She had not been worthy of such unwavering devotion. To that love Hattakowa was to surrender life. She sprang to her feet. The pain of it all overcame her. She looked around for Miko, and she saw coming toward her Marchand, who had not been at Moma Binna since Hattakowa's imprisonment.

"I would not have intruded upon you had I not been the bearer of a message," said Marchand. "I come from Ardmore."

Pakali's eyes gave him the question she could not speak.

"Mr. Dixon desired me to tell you that he is quite satisfied with the verdict brought in this noon. There was no trial, for he pleaded guilty again, and, after the barest formalities, sentence was pronounced."

Pakali stifled a cry.

"I cannot bear it! I cannot bear it!" she repeated again and again as she strove to realise that the dreaded death penalty had been legally demanded for Hattakowa.

"Your kinsman is likely to have a period of freedom," said Marchand. "He wishes you to believe that before——" he hesitated—"before the end comes all whom he loves will be reconciled to his going away."

Too weak to stand, Pakali sank upon the ground, and, while Marchand waited for her to speak, Miko, accompanied by a ragged boy, came running toward her.

"Mother, mother," he called, "I have something to tell you." Wide-eyed and trembling with excitement, Miko dragged forward the boy who tried to escape from him. "Tommy Blikens, who was out on the hill gathering wood, told me that The Man Looking for the Sun is in jail. I hit him across the mouth, but, while he cried like a baby, he shouted that The Man Looking for the Sun had killed my father, and he said I should ask you."

Tommy Blikens cowered before Pakali, who had thrown her arms around her son.

"Go away from here, Tommy," she commanded, and the freckle-faced son of Gee-Haw Blikens wasted no time in running over the rocky hillside.

Miko, gazing into his mother's face, said:

"Where is The Man Looking for the Sun?"

"He is in prison, Miko," answered Pakali. "He is to give up his life because he thought your father deserved punishment for wronging us—you and me."

"Then he is not a murderer?" said Miko.

"According to the Indian tradition he is a brave who defended his kinfolk," explained Pakali. "He killed your father because for many years you and I were neglected. The Indian has different ideas from the white man; he does not hold life so dear. The Man Looking for the Sun did what he believed to be right."

Miko thought for a moment.

"Who was my father?" he questioned.

"He was the stranger who talked to you down by Pen-

nington Creek; the man whom you met at the railway station."

"That man was kind to me. I liked him," declared Miko. "Oh, I am so sorry he is dead!" The child's lip trembled and his eyes filled with tears, and thus it happened that Arnold Stuart's son mourned for him sincerely, even though his grief lasted but a brief time.

"Why did no one tell me the stranger was my father?" the child questioned, as one who demanded to know why he had been defrauded of a natural right.

"We thought it was best to keep your mother's troubles from you until you were older," Pakali explained with a break in her voice, and Miko, putting his arms around her, kissed her with many a word of endearment.

As soon as he heard Miko ask about his father Marchand had walked away for a little distance. Now he came near to the mother and son as they sat upon the ground beneath one of the fir trees.

"It is growing late," he said. "We would better walk toward Moma Binna." He helped Pakali to rise, and, with a delicate tact that was one of his characteristics, began to talk to Miko of the nuts hanging upon the brown-leaved trees, of the sumach, still red with the splendour of autumn colour, and of the squirrels that made but scanty preparation for the mild southern winters.

Miko's replies showed his preoccupation, and, as soon as there was a brief silence, he asked the question upon which he had been pondering.

"Mother, may I go to see The Man Looking for the Sun? I want him to tell me why he killed my father. I love The Man Looking for the Sun, and he will explain what Indian sign told him to kill."

"If your grandfather thinks it is right, you shall go to Ardmore, and you shall see The Man Looking for the Sun," Pakali promised.

"I think Miko has solved the problem of how he may best learn the tragic facts that touch his life," said Pakali. "He has enough Chickasaw blood in him to feel certain things that cannot be explained in words."

"Yes, he will be a brave worthy of the Chickasaws," answered Marchand; and Miko, glancing from his mother to the white man, vaguely realised that a great responsibility rested upon him.

They walked on through the brown fields, and it was not until they had entered the grounds of Moma Binna that Marchand told Pakali he had taken charge of Hattakowa's affairs.

"I am glad you are to be my kinsman's trusted agent," Pakali said, with such sincerity as to leave no doubt of her approval.

After the evening train came in the whole town of Tishomingo heard of Hattakowa's sentence. At the post-office the news was repeated from man to man and little groups gathered beneath the electric light in front of the hotel. There was plainly a reaction in sentiment, for even the local speculators, who had found Hattakowa one of the most stubborn of the Indian obstructionists, declared that he had just provocation for the killing of Arnold Stuart. Southern traditions justify the protection of women at any cost, and those who heard how Pakali had been deserted, and how Arnold Stuart had returned to the Territory in order that he might promote a scheme to obtain possession of large tracts of Indian lands, admitted that the white man deserved death. Even though Hattakowa had held himself aloof from the enterprising settlers who were booming Tishomingo, he had won the respect of every intelligent white man.

A late comer to the hotel attracted attention. It was Ogden Maury, who had made the trip from Ardmore with Beaumont, because the old Indian was almost prostrated by the strain of the court scene. Ogden Maury had seen Beau-

mont safe inside the door of Moma Binna, and now, elbowing his way through the crowd, he reached the doorway of the hotel. Here someone stopped him to ask about the trial. Maury quickly felt the sympathy of those who awaited tidings from him.

" Joseph Dixon would not permit us to defend him," said Maury. " He desired to give a life for a life, and so he must die within thirty days. Although he carries on his head the scar of a wound made by Arnold Stuart's premature shot, he declined to let the truth be known, for he avenged more wrongs than I may mention."

A North Carolina lawyer, who stood upon the edge of the sidewalk, cheered for Joseph Dixon, and the cry was taken up by the crowd.

The next day Beaumont was too much exhausted to leave his bed, and Miko, who had gained consent to visit Hattakowa, asked if he might ride to the ranch whence he could go to Ardmore with Marchand. Permission was given because, as Beaumont repeated again and again, there was no time to be lost.

So it happened that the second day after Hattakowa was sentenced Marchand went to the jail with Miko.

The child made no comment when he saw the heavy doors swing open so that he might enter the crowded prison yard. He was quick to notice that Hattakowa looked haggard and thin, but the face of The Man Looking for the Sun brightened when he saw the boy.

" I have missed you for more than a moon," said Miko, standing before Hattakowa. The child's face had taken on a new gravity, and his manner had something of a sweet dignity, which reminded Hattakowa of Pakali.

" It has seemed as if the grass had had time to die and to become green again since last I saw the Little Chieftain,"

answered Hattakowa, waiting anxiously to learn what the child's attitude toward him would be.

"I did not know where you were until yesterday," explained Miko. "No one told me, and I just happened to find out."

"Do you know why I am shut in here?" asked Hattakowa.

"I know what you did." The child looked at him with Pakali's eyes, yet there was no reproach in his glance; "I know what you did, but my mother let me come to ask you why you killed my father."

Why? The child Hattakowa loved had come to judge him. With earnest gaze Miko looked up at the slayer of his father. Hattakowa, after scorning those whom the United States Government had appointed to weigh and to measure his deed according to the law, now trembled before the son of his Star Woman.

"The Indian believes that when a man has broken a pledge, or wronged a woman, he is no longer worthy to live." Hattakowa spoke slowly. "According to our Chickasaw and Choctaw traditions the kinsman of a woman who is wronged has the right to take blood vengeance."

"And how was my mother wronged?" Miko would have touched Hattakowa's right hand, but it was drawn away because the Indian remembered that it was stained with the blood of the boy's father.

"The white man, who promised to love and to cherish and to care for your mother until she died, broke his pledge. He went away and forgot her. He would not come back even when she was ill."

"But he did come back to Tishomingo, and perhaps he was sorry."

"He came back to help his friends take our lands from us."

Miko's eyes wandered beyond Hattakowa to the rough men who were his kinsman's fellow prisoners.

"It seems as if you did right," the boy decided, after a moment's reflection, "but why are you in prison?"

"Because," replied Hattakowa, with a touch of his old contempt for the changing order of things in the Territory; "because the white man holds it but a light offence to desert wife and children, and because he calls blood vengeance a crime."

Hattakowa raised his face to the patch of sky above the prison walls and for a moment forgot his surroundings while he felt again the fierce spirit of the avenger.

Miko touched him upon the arm.

"Does blood vengeance help those who are wronged?" the boy asked. "My mother is very sad, Man Looking for the Sun."

Does blood vengeance help? Hattakowa repeated the question to himself. In the days of his imprisonment he was coming to comprehend that blood vengeance meant not alone punishment for the offender, but sorrow for those whose wrongs demanded action on the part of the avenger. The white man's creed of toleration had altered the code so that woman must suffer without redress. Hattakowa bowed his head.

"I have asked too many questions," said Miko, when he saw that Hattakowa was silent. "The Little Chieftain must not be troublesome, but Miko is sad since his mother told him The Man Looking for the Sun must give up his life."

"Hush, my boy." Hattakowa roused himself from his abstraction. "Let us talk of the woods and the creek. It is almost time for the wild turkey hunt you and I were to enjoy together."

CHAPTER XXXVII

RESPITE

For many days George Beaumont and Henry Sands had been working out a plan by which the Chickasaw Nation could assume the responsibilities of Hattakowa's custody. As soon as they knew that Hattakowa would make no defence and that sentence of death must therefore be passed upon him, they prepared a petition to the Federal Court. This document, which bore the names of the leading men of the Nation, asked that the prisoner who had killed Arnold Stuart, be delivered to the tribal authorities on condition that the Nation pledge itself to inflict the death sentence according to the manner established by the Indian laws. Although jurisdiction in criminal cases had been withdrawn from the Chickasaws, the plea was made that exception be taken in this instance in which the victim was entitled to partial recognition as an intermarried citizen. Arnold Stuart had never qualified as a member of the Chickasaws, but he was the father of a boy duly adopted by the legislature. He had been slain by the kinsman of the wife he had deserted. Joseph Dixon, upon whom the death sentence had been passed, had made no effort to defend himself, and had announced that he was ready to pay the price of blood vengeance. For these good and sufficient reasons the Chickasaw Nation prayed that it might have the privilege of carrying out the white man's sentence according to the red man's methods.

Judge Maury forwarded a copy of this document to the Department of the Interior the day Hattakowa was sentenced. The Secretary was prepared to take special notice

of the case when it was referred to him by the Judge of the Southern District of Indian Territory.

The request from the Chickasaw Nation was so unusual that one of the Secretary's assistants mentioned it to General Chillingsworth, who was no longer an attaché of the Department, although his advice often was sought.

"The United States Government ought to prevent the death sentence from being inflicted," declared the General, who showed the greatest perturbation when he heard that the law gave Hattakowa but a month of life. Back and forth he turned the pages of the strange petition. As he read it the veins swelled in his forehead.

"This man, Joseph Dixon, is the Chickasaw who was elected governor several years ago. He was defrauded of his place by the native party which is the instrument of crafty politicians, who are using the United States Government for their personal schemes to plunder the red men."

The department attaché smiled indulgently upon the old soldier, as he replied:

"Ever since you made that first trip to the Territory, General Chillingsworth, you have been such an enthusiastic partisan of the Indians that I am justified in doubting your judgment. A lot of sentiment is being wasted nowadays upon the 'vanishing race' which has been an expense and a nuisance to the United States Government ever since the establishment of the Republic."

"The vanishing red race understands the impossibility of overcoming the prejudice of the encroaching white race," General Chillingsworth replied. "But we need not discuss the whole Indian question. What do you intend to do with this petition?"

"It will cause a lot of trouble if the Department grants the plea of these Chickasaws," the attaché remarked, carelessly. "I think it is best not to interfere with the case."

"I know it would be wise in the United States Government to let the Indians execute this man Dixon, who is a splendid fellow, wealthy, well educated, and a gentleman in the widest sense of the word," said the General.

The Secretary's assistant smiled another indulgent smile.

"I'll think it over," he promised. "As soon as I have a chance I will ask the Secretary to take up the matter."

"There's no time to be lost," warned the General. "Joseph Dixon has been confined in the Ardmore jail for many weeks. It is a prison that would make the officials of Siberia blush. Since Dixon is to live so short a time, turn him over to his people as soon as possible. You will pardon an old man for seeming presumptuous in giving advice, but, as a favour to me, will you not see that this case has special attention?"

The Secretary's assistant considered it worth while to humour an old man, and, in order to avoid further importunity, he made the desired promise.

Thus it happened that a week later the Governor of the Chickasaw Nation gave to the Secretary of the Interior, representing the United States Government, a pledge that, on the thirtieth day of November, Joseph Dixon should be publicly shot.

When the doors of the prison opened upon Hattakowa, he was met by all the Chickasaw officials. Beaumont, Sands, Marchand, and Judge Maury had gone to the jail at an early hour. They found Hattakowa distributing among his fellow prisoners the numerous possessions which had added to his comfort. He greeted his friends with a cheerfulness that would have been natural if he had been going out to meet life instead of death.

"As soon as I see the rolling prairies, the stretches of timber land, and the clear waters of Pennington Creek I shall forget all the horrors of this place," he said, as he

waited inside the iron gate. "I mean to make the best of the days still belonging to me."

Judge Maury looked down at his gaitered feet, and it was as if Marchand saw death hand in hand with Hattakowa. Neither of the old Indians showed that he comprehended what was in the condemned man's mind.

They stood near the younger Chickasaw, waiting patiently until the hour of his freedom should arrive. The key turned in the padlocked gate. Once more Hattakowa shook hands with the prisoners. The iron hinges grated. Outside, the Chickasaws cheered. On the wall the guards stopped their monotonous march as they watched Hattakowa step out into the narrow quadrangle, where his friends greeted him with a demonstrativeness unusual among Indians. In the crowd were many fullbloods, conspicuous among whom was Jimmy Sunfish. John Oaktree's sons were there, bringing messages from their aged father. Last of all, Cole Mattison pressed forward to offer his hand.

"Blood is thicker than water," he said.

Hattakowa and the Chickasaw officials went to Tishomingo on the train which left Ardmore within an hour. Beaumont, Sands, Marchand, and Judge Maury accompanied the party, but they went into a separate car, where they could discuss many things which concerned Hattakowa.

When Tishomingo was reached, several hundred men of the Nation waited to escort Hattakowa to the capitol, where he gave his promise to appear before sundown on the thirtieth day of November at a place which should be selected by the Governor, there to meet death, according to the tribal law inscribed upon the statute books of the Chickasaw Nation.

It was an hour before Hattakowa could leave the friends who gathered around him on the capitol steps. The fullbloods showed toward him the pride they would have felt for a chief who returned from a victory. He had proved

that he had not the white man's fear of death; he had shown that, while the white man's law might take away his life, it could not break his spirit. He had been chosen their Governor, and the Federal authorities had decided against him, but he was by nature a leader, and, although he had been educated in the white man's schools, and had passed months in the white man's cities, he was always an Indian. In other halfbreeds they had resented the metamorphosis wrought by civilisation, but Hattakowa's individuality always had been so strong that his fashionable dress, his polished manners, and his luxurious way of living had been accepted without criticism, for was he not the Great Hunter? And did he not cherish all the traditions of his race? The white man's religion had not supplanted the superstitions of the red man, therefore he would die with the grim indifference befitting the descendant of a great warrior. He would be worthy of his illustrious kinsman, Apushamatahah.

Some of the Indians rebelled against the loss of a tribesman whose help the Nation needed, but when they voiced their feelings Hattakowa bade them to believe that through his death good might come to the Chickasaws.

At last he was free to descend the hill from the capitol to the street where, in a covered carriage, waited his mother. Mrs. Dixon pressed her thin lips against her son's cheek, and, in silence, sat beside him many minutes after he had taken the lines from her hands. Marchand and a coloured servant followed them on horseback as they drove into the gate leading toward the ranch.

" It seems as if years had passed since last we went this way together," said Mrs. Dixon, after they had reached a bridge crossing Pennington Creek. She turned to her son with the intense look of maternal solicitude, which mingled with the natural animal instinct of motherhood the tenderness of a woman of intelligence. Her face had a withered

look, and her dark eyes burned in sockets deepened by sleepless nights and racking anxieties.

"I have made you suffer terribly, mother," answered Hattakowa. "That is my only regret, but I know you understand."

"Yes, I understand," said Mrs. Dixon, with a sigh, and, as if that understanding reminded her of Pakali, she drew from a little handbag a letter which she gave to her son.

"Pakali sent this to you." She spoke quietly, but her thin lips tightened and she sat upright with folded hands lest she should see the joy in Hattakowa's face.

"You and Pakali must be nearer than ever before when——" Hattakowa hesitated—"I am not here."

Mrs. Dixon, with a convulsive motion, loosened the bonnet strings which seemed to choke her. "Your life seems wasted. You will lose it before you have what belongs to you," she cried, in a voice which carried a heart-broken protest against his destiny.

"I have been trying to understand myself," answered Hattakowa. "I have come to realise that my spirit is a strange survival from the past, or, rather, I might say that I came into the world several generations too late. If I could live many years I should still be out of place. I could not conform to existing conditions without constant ineffectual resistance which would always prevent me from knowing anything like peace. Mine is an insurgent spirit that must meet defeat."

"How shall I be able to bear your going!" Mrs. Dixon grasped Hattakowa's wrist, as if she would hold him forever. "I am trying to be brave, but it seems as if I could not endure what is before me." Her dark skin took on a leaden hue, and her thin face was stamped with the terror of the thought that constantly haunted her—the thought of her son's death.

"I shall try to make it as easy for you as possible," Hatta-

kowa said, with tenderness in his voice. "If I can cause my death to be of some benefit to my people, you can bear it."

They drove on, and Hattakowa spoke no more of himself, but instead he rejoiced over the beauty of the purple hills, the sweep of the rolling prairies, and the quiet of the autumn day.

"It is good to be free," he said, when they were near the large rambling house which had long been his home. "Mother, perhaps this sense of liberty is but a hint of the freedom I shall feel when the spirit goes from my body. From this day on you and I will give no vain regret to what must be."

Hattakowa did not enter the ranch house until he had gone away by himself into the little wood beyond a wide stretch of pasture land. Here, where he was alone once more with nature, he read Pakali's letter. The words, penned with an unsteady hand, told him that she who unwittingly had brought him to the threshold of death, desired to see him at Moma Binna. A postscript from Miko assured The Man Looking for the Sun that the Little Chieftain loved him.

For a week Hattakowa remained on the ranch, where he had many business affairs to put in order. He found that Marchand had proved an agent worthy of his trust, and the young Kentuckian was a valuable aid in attending to details which Hattakowa disliked. The two men became friends in the best way, for each recognised and respected distinctive individual traits in the other, yet the red man and the white man represented types so widely at variance that it was not easy to understand upon what common ground they met.

Until he had been confined in the Ardmore prison Hattakowa had never analysed his emotions; he had merely recognised them. The loss of his Star Woman had been his one great sorrow; he had rebelled against it, and the years had

failed to bring him resignation. Now that he was forced to look upon life as a traveller beholds for the last time a panorama of plain and valley and mesa before he passes over the mountain range, Hattakowa discovered that the white man's philosophy was a help to him. He and Marchand worked together all day, and at night they talked many hours after Mrs. Dixon had gone to bed. In these days Hattakowa grudged every moment spent in sleep.

Long after midnight he walked far afield over the prairies or wandered through the wide strips of timber land, made desolate by the cold of late autumn. It was in these periods of solitude that Hattakowa strove for a triumphant spirit of renunciation. Without regret he could put off the spirit's garment of flesh. After he was dead he might still be near to his Star Woman, through all the years that she remained on earth, but if there came a time when she should belong to another man, would not he be a tormented wanderer traversing the vast moonlit plains in which the Indian dwells through what the white man calls eternity? Hattakowa liked to retain his faith in the old Chickasaw tradition that after death the spirit might linger near to the earthly precincts wherein those whom it had loved still tarried until it was content to cross the earth's great chasm beyond which lay the land of the blessed.

From the first day in which he had contemplated the payment of his life as a penalty for blood vengeance, Hattakowa had been possessed with a longing to perform some act which would prove his devotion to the Chickasaw Nation. In the period of his incarceration land frauds had multiplied, and the Government at Washington appeared ignorant of conditions in the Territory. Why should not he carry the truth to the President of the United States? While he was in prison this question had presented itself again and again as if to mock his helplessness. Now he was free. He would have three weeks of liberty, ample time in which to

make a journey to Washington. Carefully he thought out every detail that might contribute to the success of his mission. He still had the copy of the syndicate's papers, which the cyclone had been the means of putting into his possession, and from Sands and Beaumont he could obtain data concerning illegal enrollments, bribery in obtaining mineral leases, waste of the public school funds, and general rascality in the conduct of tribal business. Through all the dishonesty and injustice he could trace the influence of men who prostituted their political power and betrayed the confidence of the United States Government. If he could gain the ear of the President he would plead the cause of his people so that their cry for justice would be heeded.

With feverish haste he transacted all his personal business. Judge Maury was summoned to the ranch for the purpose of giving advice.

"Before I agree to any scheme for the benefit of the whole Chickasaw Nation, I want to speak of the welfare of one Indian." The Judge unbuttoned his shiny broadcloth frock coat as if to give himself more breathing space. "Joseph Dixon, you must not sacrifice your life because of a mad idea that you are protecting your kinswoman from notoriety. It is not too late for something to be done."

Rising from his chair Hattakowa proudly faced the old lawyer:

"I have chosen to die as a man should die," he answered. "The Chickasaw Nation has pledged itself to inflict upon me the death penalty. Would you have me discredit my people? Would you have the Indian become as indifferent to the meaning of a pledge as his white brother? I command you now, as you value my honour, not to dare by any legal subterfuge to attempt what you would call my 'rescue' from death. If I could have life for the asking, I should not want it."

"You have everything that should make a man happy,"

said the Judge. " I cannot understand why you have never seemed contented."

Hattakowa, glancing past the Judge, beheld on Marchand's face a look of such comprehension that beneath his dark skin the blood surged to his face.

" One man can see but a short distance into the life of another," he remarked, as he turned away with the pretence that something on his desk attracted his attention.

" Are you ready to help me make my will now? " he asked, as he arranged a mass of papers, and Marchand, opening the French window, went out of doors.

CHAPTER XXXVIII

THE HOUR OF CLEAR VISION

MOONLIGHT turned the autumn world into a place of vague beauty. Tishomingo lay in the quiet of early night. Its houses cast queer shadows upon the streets, white and wavering, as they stretched from hill to hill. In the distance the mountains were sharply outlined against the silver sky, in which the stars were dimmed by the brightness of the moon. As Pakali walked upon the ledge overlooking the town, she felt as if the glory of sky and earth made the black despair of the human heart more terrible.

Moma Binna, spread out upon the little plateau, appeared as if it were the abode of peace and happiness. From the great stone chimney of the living room curled a little thread of smoke, for the night was chilly, and Beaumont craved the warmth of an open fire. The vines over the porch were bare, their tendrils forming a delicate network through which the moonlight fell upon the floor of the veranda. The house was in darkness, since Beaumont, gazing at the burning logs, was occupied with sad thoughts, and had no need of candle or lamp. In the servants' quarters some of the negroes were singing, their rich, deep voices blending in a minor melody.

Back and forth, up and down the garden path Pakali paced, waiting for Hattakowa and Miko to return from a long day's hunting trip. Hattakowa had come to Moma Binna in the morning, but he had purposely avoided seeing Pakali, for whom he left the message that he desired to pass an hour with her in the evening. Unless some unexpected measure of mercy interfered, it would be the last time that Hattakowa climbed the hill to Moma Binna.

Pakali had put on a white wool dress, and about her shoulders she wore a crimson scarf, that her kinsman had given her when she was a school girl. It was not coquetry which caused her to attire herself so that in appearance she would be as far as possible the Pakali of the old days; a sense of delicacy forced her to avoid all that might remind Hattakowa of her tragic widowhood. She had never changed her coiffure, and to-night the "tucking comb" caught the heavy braids at the back of her head.

The glare of day showed lines in Pakali's face, but now, in the moonlight, the woman who stepped forward to greet Hattakowa, as slowly he came up the road, with Miko far ahead of him, was so much like the girl from whom the Indian had claimed the first kiss, that the strong man stood speechless before his Star Woman. The Indian's hunting costume, with long leggings and loose flannel shirt, made him a picturesque figure, since it brought out his sturdy strength of limb and his splendid breadth of shoulder.

"We have had the happiest day, mother," shouted Miko. "We have brought home enough game to keep the Blikens family for a week, and see! I am all safe, for my gun did not go off at the wrong time, and we did not have a single mishap."

Pakali forced herself to smile upon Miko.

"The Man Looking for the Sun talked much to me when we were in the woods," said Miko, putting his gun against a tree, and then reaching up to kiss his mother. "The Little Chieftain has promised The Man Looking for the Sun that he will care for Pakali, The Flower, and comfort her and protect her for the sake of one who could not stay on earth to watch over her. Of course The Man Looking for the Sun knew I would be good to my mother, but he has told me why I must be more tender and more loving than any other boy in the Chickasaw Nation."

Pakali held Miko in a close embrace.

"Why do you tremble so?" Miko asked, when he saw that with shut lips and half-closed eyes his mother heard his words.

"Let me tell your mother what I said, Little Chieftain," suggested Hattakowa. "While you go in to see your grandfather I will stay here with her."

Miko left Hattakowa and Pakali there together.

"This hour with you is a gift I have coveted from fate." Hattakowa spoke quietly, as if he strove to make her understand that his nearness to death troubled him little. He cast aside the broad felt hat which he had worn, and, throwing upon the ground his gun and game bag, he stepped forward as if he would have touched her. Then, remembering that blood of her husband was upon his hand, he drew back.

"When you were in prison I wanted to visit you," confessed Pakali.

"It was enough to know, Pakali, that you tried to understand my action."

Pakali shrank away from him, as he spoke of what he had done.

"Oh, if you knew how I have suffered, because I am responsible for all this trouble!" she exclaimed, putting her hands upon her breast. "Oh, I have thought and thought, in order that I might find some way by which I could bear my part of the punishment for all that has come to our family since I gave my love to the white man, yet I am helpless, helpless!"

"You must not feel as you do." Hattakowa went nearer to his Aiahnichih-Choyoh.

When they were children he had often comforted Pakali, and now, forgetting that he meant not to touch her, he tenderly put his arm around her and led her toward the house. She felt his strength, and quickly gained command of herself. Looking up into his face, she saw for the first

time the scar upon his forehead. Instantly Hattakowa, remembering, drew away from her.

" For the moment I forgot all else except that you needed my sympathy," he said. " I have made myself unfit to touch you."

" No, no, do not say that," Pakali protested. " I know how you received the wound, and, even if that mark were not significant, did not our old Indian law declare that when a man pledged himself to give a life for a life it was as if the deed for which he promised to suffer was forever blotted out? And was not such a man received among his people as one more honoured than all who had no chance to prove their courage? I have thought much of this, and when you came to me I hoped you would ignore all else except the one fact that you are going away on a long journey."

" Pakali, could not we pretend for a little while that you and I are here to talk as we talked long ago, just before we were sent away to college? " Hattakowa drew a chair for Pakali out into the space beyond the shadow of the vines, and wrapped about her a shawl which he found upon a bench. Then, sitting at her feet, upon the top step, he waited for her to speak.

" My father has told me of your mission to Washington," she said, presently. " I am sure no one could plead for the Nation with more eloquence than you can command. If you go away from us knowing that, through your intercession, our people's wrongs will be diminished, you will be sure your life has not been wasted."

" This hour will make the going away easier." Hattakowa gazed at Pakali as if he would impress her image upon his memory so distinctly that he would carry it through eternity.

" There is so much to tell you, Pakali, that if we talked here until sunrise I should not be able to say half that is in my heart." Hattakowa spoke in low tones, that recalled

the beginning of many a boyhood confession. "Although I may not share with you the thoughts which have come to me since I have had death for a near neighbour, I know that gradually they will reach you as if, from across the great chasm, I sent them back to earth. You and I, who belong to a vanishing race, have sorrow as our heritage, and we must view our lives in their relation to the future. We must see ourselves as overwhelmed by the great forces of progress; we must become as the pebble lost in the river as long as water runs, and as dust in the prairie as long as grass grows; but dust and pebble may serve some high purpose. I have been only half fatalist or I would not have rebelled against destiny. Through my mistakes I would have you strengthened in your belief that the Indian can do nothing but conform to new conditions. Teaching and preaching, you have already helped the children of the Chickasaws. Show them how they may choose the best of the white man's ways; how they may acquire true wisdom from his vast fund of knowledge. Death, waiting at my elbow for many a week, has taught me my lesson. I want it to serve all the Five Nations who are soon to be recognised as American citizens."

"I shall train Miko to devote whatever talents have been given him to the service of the Indian race," Pakali promised.

"And you will look upon my death without any feeling of dread? Promise me that you will try to think of it as the cutting down of a pine tree in the forest. I have often wondered why those who embrace the Christian religion do not rejoice when the soul is set free. Cannot you go back to your Indian belief enough to feel that death is a prize and not a penalty?"

"I have a woman's heart," faltered Pakali.

"But it is the heart of a Chickasaw woman, therefore you will meet me at the sunset hour when all my people shall

have gathered to say good-bye to me. I am so selfish that I would behold your face on that last day."

Nervously she clasped her hands in her lap, and whispered:

"I am afraid—I am afraid that I cannot bear it."

"You will be stronger when the time comes. It is a hard ordeal I would have you endure, but somehow I believe the power of this great love I have for you will sustain you so that you can let me look upon your face when the last hour of my life has come."

But while Pakali cowered before the image of death, vainly seeking to give the promise Hattakowa asked of her, Beaumont, leaning upon his cane, was slowly walking upon the side veranda. Reaching the corner, he saw Hattakowa and Pakali.

"I have been waiting for you to come in and see me," he said, addressing Hattakowa, in a half reproachful tone. "There are many matters to be discussed."

Hattakowa went with Beaumont to the living room fireside. Left alone, Pakali shivered in the moonlight. She had asked how she might help to bear the punishment Hattakowa would suffer, and now he had shown her the way. She tried to summon what fortitude she had at her command, but this supreme test of her endurance appeared too terrible to be borne. She went down into the garden, and, looking up at the sky, tried to pray, but she found herself too weak even to desire the strength that she would need if she should go to the place of death. She paced the ledge through a long half hour, and then Hattakowa came from the house.

"It is farewell now," he said, softly. "Farewell, my Star Woman."

She put out both her hands, and they looked into each other's eyes.

In his heart rose the tides of feeling. They swept over

him until his spirit was submerged. For a moment all that was human in him craved her. He would have held her to his breast, telling her the hundred thoughts that the surge of his heart cast upon his brain. Life had long meant to him only Pakali, and now, when he was taking leave of her, he was suffering the one death agony. The sunset hour of the November day which was coming could bring him little pain after he had given up the woman he loved. With steady gaze he looked into her eyes, commanding her spirit to meet his, and for a moment Pakali had the revelation of a strong man's love—the great love that survives years of change, holding life as merely an opportunity for its expression. Her pulses quickened. The moonlit world took on a strange glory. If, long ago, she could have understood, if she could have but known that education, travel, and all the civilised arts of men are as nothing when weighed against the great primal impulse; if she could have but known the thing that the white man calls progress cannot change the heart's desire for the encompassing, all-sufficient love—she and Hattakowa might have been delivered from tragedy; they might have known happiness!

They held each other's hands while a fragment of time was added to their lives, but in those moments the trivial things of the world fell away from them. Together they beheld the vision which unveiled the mysteries of existence and taught them the meanings of sorrow, the causes of suffering. While they looked thus at each other the flood tide from Hattakowa's heart receded and with its ebb came an enduring calm.

"My Indian faith denies me the comfort of your belief in a Heaven where those who love shall meet again," he said, solemnly, "but somewhere my spirit will wait for yours."

He put both her hands upon his breast, and held them there, as if thus he would give courage to his heart, which

failed him when he would have turned to go away from her.

For another moment they stood there, and then Hattakowa went away, walking as a soldier marches to victory. At the ledge he stopped to wave his hand to Pakali in the old gesture with which, ever since he was a boy, he had been accustomed to go away from Moma Binna.

CHAPTER XXXIX

WAITING

When it was known that Hattakowa, accompanied by his mother, had taken a journey, ostensibly to Washington, many of the newcomers to the Territory declared that the Indian had fled from what they called justice. Billy Brown, who first heard the news from Jim Dalton, flew into a violent rage at what he declared was the "laxity" of a government which would entrust a man under sentence of death to a lot of irresponsible Indians. Billy Brown's anger was not altogether impersonal, for he immediately asked the question:

"If Joseph Dixon went to Washington, what was his errand?"

"Some say he went to complain to the President about our syndicates and our schemes for the obstruction of Statehood," explained Dalton.

"It's more likely he's gone to plead for his own life," commented the banker, but he did not mean what he said. He had gained too much knowledge of the Indian character to imagine that Hattakowa would ask for mercy.

Judge Maury was in a state bordering on nervous prostration, inasmuch as he had exhausted every effort that might persuade Hattakowa to invoke Federal clemency. Although Hattakowa had forbidden him to make any move that would call attention to the case, he had obtained General Chillingsworth's assistance in again presenting it to the Department of the Interior. While Hattakowa and his mother journeyed eastward, the Judge impatiently watched the mails. In those days he partook of copious draughts of whisky, imported by a client who dealt in drygoods, and frequently

brought in cases marked " hoisery " which contained liquors of popular brands. The Judge passed much time pacing the worn oilcloth of his office floor, and thinking of Hattakowa's death sentence. Judge Maury had taken many bracing drinks one day when Henry Sands climbed the steps leading to the shabby office. Sands looked tired and worried. Hattakowa was almost as dear to him as one of his own sons, and now he found his Indian stoicism deserting him when he contemplated the fate of the Chickasaw, whom he considered best fitted to succeed Beaumont as an unofficial guardian of the Nation.

" Have some firewater," suggested the Judge, with an assumption of the jaunty manner that had once been one of his distinguishing characteristics.

Sands shook his large head.

" Unless I took enough to make me forget everything, it would not be worth while to taste the white man's liquor," he averred.

" I've been wondering whether Hattakowa's mission to Washington can possibly bring any good to the Five Nations," Sands said, when he had seated himself in one of the broken-springed chairs.

" I believe it will, I believe it will." The Judge had taken enough whisky to brighten his view of any subject.

" Even if he obtains a hearing I fear he has so much to say that the President will be tired listening to him long before he has mentioned half our wrongs," remarked Sands.

" Don't worry about that, don't worry about that." The Judge stopped pacing the floor, and, putting his thumbs into the armholes of his waistcoat, stood prepared to give encouragement to his old friend. " I have never known a more eloquent man than young Dixon. He will compel attention. I have hoped that he will be recognised as the Indian who is under death sentence, but I know he will conceal that fact lest it be supposed that he bids for sympathy."

" He appears desirous of dying," remarked Sands. " The last thing before he left Tishomingo he insisted upon entrusting all the details of certain matters connected with the execution to me." The Indian wiped the cold sweat from his forehead. " He wanted me to use my influence with the Chickasaw officials in such a way that the old tribal ceremony of inflicting the death penalty will be followed as closely as possible."

The Judge poured some whisky into a glass and offered it to Sands, who declined to taste the liquor. The Judge swallowed it at one gulp.

The short November days hastened by. In Tishomingo business activity was increased by the coming of many new residents who waited impatiently for opportunities to procure land from the Indians. The cry for Statehood was taken up by the white men who were eager for the final settlement of Indian affairs. In all parts of the Territory broken-down politicians and friends of politicians from various centres of America's boasted civilisation were beginning to cherish congressional ambitions.

A new Governor, who was said to be allied with the white politicians, had been elected. Sands had declared that this man, who was to have the honour of being one of the last of the Chickasaw chieftains, belonged to the party of " addition, division, and silence." During the campaign, which took place in August, Sands had rallied about him the Non-Progressive faction of the Chickasaws, but, without the aid of Beaumont, who was disabled by the tragedy which touched his family, comparatively little had been accomplished. The younger Chickasaws espoused the cause of the party which promised to hasten the full American citizenship that would carry with it recognition of equality with the white man.

Now Hattakowa's tragic position suddenly united all fac-

tions among the Chickasaws. The whole Nation discovered that the descendant of Apushamatahah had never done ill to any man; it was remembered how lavishly he had spent his money for whatever enterprise promised help for his people. Many who had besieged the capitol on the night when Hattakowa and his friends were entrenched within it, declared that much fraud might have been prevented if he had been permitted to hold the office of Governor. Doubts concerning the probability of the voluntary return of an Indian sentenced to death, when expressed by the white men in the Territory, appealed to the tribal spirit and were resented by all who belonged to the Nation. Although the Mattisons and their supporters had espoused the principles cunningly formulated by the political scapegraces who claimed to enjoy the confidence of the Federal Government, their Indian blood asserted itself when the honour of the whole Nation was at stake. Hattakowa's death would show the white man how the red man could keep a pledge. Never in the history of the Chickasaws had it been necessary to imprison a man who was to be executed. It was enough for a Chickasaw to give his word that he would be present on the day and hour signified by the agents of the law.

Pakali counted the days as a miser who beholds his precious hoard disappear, piece by piece. In the nights she strove to make close acquaintance with the elusive idea of death, but when she would have faced the dread presence it was far away from her—it was following Hattakowa. She tried to comprehend how it would be when she was called to put away life, but the blood beat in her head and she could not think. She saw Hattakowa's face in the darkness, and again and again she felt the consoling influence of his strength. At first in paroxysms of grief she cried out that she could not have conditions as they were. She prayed that in some way the cup of bitterness might be taken from her lips. Her wish now and then

beguiled her into the belief that Hattakowa could not be permitted to die; that, at the last, some power would interfere. At first when she besought Heaven to spare the life of her kinsman, to make less the burden of all her responsibility for his terrible deed and its apportioned punishment, she found but scant solace in seeking Divine help. Gradually, as she recalled, word by word, all that Hattakowa had said to her, she partook of his fortitude; she absorbed something of his upreaching spirit. Like him, she groped toward the light, then, after the precious store of days was greatly diminished, she learned to pray for the submission that had in it an abiding courage. She asked for a larger faith; she pleaded that the right knowledge might be given her. It was after she had gone into the brown woods in the second week of Hattakowa's absence that she returned to Moma Binna there to search the pages of the Little Mother's Bible which still remained in its old place on a small table in the living room. Until late into the night she read of the half barbaric peoples whose lives were chronicled in the Old Testament. Long ago the Lord had been merciful; he had provided cities of refuge for the slayers of their fellow men. The pages of Holy Writ bore the records of many lives in which blood vengeance had been exacted.

When it was too dark to see the words, Pakali bowed her head upon the Book of Books.

CHAPTER XL

SUNSET

In the late autumn came a day that gathered to itself the splendour of an earlier season. Summer lingers long in the Territory, and now, although the winter was near, golden rod still bloomed along the road, the yellow of the late flower blurred by the feathery veil of tall grasses. In neglected cotton fields here and there bursting bolls shed their snowy store upon the dry earth. On the trees curling leaves clung to branches outlined against the exquisite blue of a cloudless sky. Gentle winds, sweeping up from the Gulf of Mexico, bore the faint incense of the dried foliage that lay upon the ground. It was one of those days when the world which has sowed and reaped, garnered and stored, seems to listen for the voice of God.

In the early morning the busy life of Tishomingo was hushed, for in the Chickasaw capital there were few who did not awaken with the thought that before night fell a life would be taken from among those who comprised the Nation. Some there were who marvelled that nature should not mourn. A grey week of threatened storm suddenly had ended in a burst of golden sunshine which was reflected in ripple and eddy of Pennington Creek as the stream hurried by the town.

Far above Tishomingo lay a little park, heavily wooded. Here Pennington Creek fell over a wall of rock and, dizzily losing itself in whirlpools, hollowed out a wide, curved basin before it went on to find the distant river. It was in this park, a tiny valley as yet untouched by the hand of man, that the Chickasaw Nation gathered to await the coming of Hattakowa.

At sunrise fullbloods and halfbreeds began to journey to the place of death, and by noon the woodland had become the camping ground of many hundred Indians.

Hattakowa had been expected to return to the Territory at the beginning of the week, but he had sent a message to Beaumont announcing his detention in Washington. This delay gave some of the white men an opportunity to declare that there would be no execution, and, whenever a train came into Tishomingo, a curious crowd gathered at the station.

As the afternoon shadows began to lengthen, Marchand rode along the main street of the town. He had been doing many last errands for Hattakowa, and now, as he turned into the street leading past the capitol, he stopped, wheeled his horse, and, uncovering his head, looked toward Moma Binna. He had thought constantly of Pakali, but he had refrained from intruding upon her. With a dread that now and then unnerved him he had looked forward to this day, and he showed upon his face the pallor of sleeplessness. He had written many letters to General Chillingsworth, whose aid he asked in whatever device could be suggested for the deliverance of Hattakowa. Now all effort would be unavailing; it was too late to save the Indian whom he had learned to love as a man loves the friend stronger than himself.

While with uncovered head he sat in the saddle, the horse that he rode fretted at the bit. The animal was a splendid mount, a favourite with Hattakowa, who called him Kanowa, The Hunter. "Steady, old boy, steady!" said Marchand, speaking the words in a tone which lacked a reassuring ring, for the Kentuckian, more than the horse he rode, needed a cheering admonition. No Marchand had ever lacked the fine courage that enabled him to meet bravely whatever life brought him, but the spirit was sometimes stronger than the body. Philip Marchand's flesh crept when he thought of the sunset hour in which Pakali would endure the ordeal of

taking part in the ancient death ceremonies of the Chickasaws.

Kanowa threw back his head, and, not waiting for signal from his rider, galloped down the road. The Kentuckian let him have his way, reluctantly guiding the animal toward the park where the Indians were assembling.

As Marchand came near the woodland the scene that met his eyes was one of half barbaric picturesqueness. It was as if the reversion to the death ceremony had recalled many tribal customs. A clearing had been made among maple saplings and here a camp fire had been built. Over it swarthy-skinned women were cooking. One of them had on a much-trimmed hat which gave an incongruous touch to the picture, for her companions wore bright-coloured woollen scarfs upon their heads. On the ground sprawled many small children, and the men, smoking solemnly, sat in groups. The bright print frocks of the little girls and the gay gowns of the halfbreed women gave touches of colour to the scene.

Dismounting, Marchand tied Kanowa to the slender trunk of a young oak. He was glad to have reached the place of death early so that he might have time in which to borrow from the Indians something of their stoicism. Finding a log upon the edge of the creek he sat there listening to the sound of the waters and watching the movements of the Indians until it was as if he dreamed. Long, long he waited until the haze of the afternoon softened the light in the woods and made the grove like a dim cathedral.

John Oaktree and his sons came, bringing with them women and children. Then the two Mattisons, accompanied by many who had been their political supporters, arrived in omnibuses. The growing crowd quickened with expectancy.

The Governor of the Chickasaw Nation and his staff, forming a cavalcade typical of the official duty to which the Nation had pledged itself, rode through the throng of Indians, and, slowly circling in front of a giant tree marked

by a gorgeous war bonnet, sharply drew the line indicating the boundaries of the place of death. Remaining in their saddles the representatives of the Indian government waited for the condemned man.

Judge Maury and Ogden Maury walked beneath the maple trees on the edge of the grove. The older man's usual air of self-sufficiency had disappeared. Reaching a spot a little apart from the Indians the Judge leaned against the trunk of a tree.

At last it was known in the throng that Pakali had reached the place of death, but the Indians made no stir of curious scrutiny. Before her walked Governor Sands with his family, and beside her limped her father, bowed upon his cane. She held Miko by the hand, and the child had acquired something of the fortitude which made his mother appear as one who had conquered grief. With her lips firmly closed and her eyes fixed in the level gaze which sees nothing, she accompanied Henry Sands, who led her across the circle made by the people of her Nation. Near the tree upon which the feathers of the war bonnet stirred in the breeze, Pakali, Beaumont, and Miko met all who could claim blood relationship to Hattakowa. The women removed their hats, and, presently, Marchand, gazing from a distance, beheld Pakali endowed with an alien beauty. Suffering had put the stamp of a chastened maturity upon her face; the light of youth had gone from her eyes, in which glowed a sustaining faith. Her garments were the colour of the dead brown leaves, and loosely about her shoulders she wore a cloak, long and full.

Now, after all the Nation had assembled, the moments dragged by. Silence fell upon the strange gathering; the falling waters of Pennington made the only sound which broke the oppressive stillness.

When the sun was but an hour away from the summit of the western hills, white inhabitants of Tishomingo who ig-

nored the Indian desire to escape observation, had gathered in such numbers that members of the Indian police were detailed to keep curious spectators outside the grove. These white men, now sure that the Indian's pledge was as little to be depended upon as their own, made new bets while they lingered in the hope of being able to taunt the humiliated Chickasaws. The wind died down; the haze deepened. Then, while Pakali, watching the sun, counted the moments still remaining in her kinsman's life, the beat of a horse's hoofs was heard in the road, and Hattakowa, driving rapidly, passed the white men, who stared, and then cheered as they saw him hurry on to his death.

At the edge of the woodland Hattakowa lifted his mother from the light carriage in which they had driven from the station.

" Sa minteh—I have come! " he said, turning to his tribesmen.

Beaumont and Henry Sands went toward him, but Marchand reached him first. Declining proffers of help Hattakowa looked for a place to tie his horse, and his eye fell upon Kanowa. He stroked the sleek neck of the animal which he had petted since it was a colt. Then, casting his glance around the circle of Indians who had assembled to say farewell to him, he made his way toward the tree on which hung the war bonnet. Slowly he moved among his friends, often pausing to speak to one for whom he had a last greeting.

Mrs. Dixon, walking with erect carriage, followed her son. All who saw her knew that she had found the courage which would enable her to bear, without a sign of suffering, whatever grief she felt. Beaumont, bowed and feeble, went to her, and, taking her arm, drew her to Pakali's side.

Heeding the sign of the war bonnet Hattakowa stepped to the tree upon which it hung. He had passed Pakali as if he did not see her, but now his eyes sought hers and he knew that she had come to this place of death believing that they

would find each other when both their spirits were free. With difficulty he shook off the spell of her presence. Raising his head, he pushed back the hair which fell upon his broad forehead, and turned to scan the faces of the Chickasaws. As he stood there in the splendid strength of his mature manhood even the least emotional of those who beheld him felt a pang of regret because such a life was to be surrendered before its vigour had spent itself.

" Oh, Chickasaws, my brothers and sisters, I have brought you a message of hope," said Hattakowa, speaking in a quiet voice which carried his words to the edge of the throng. " I have been to see him whom our people once called the Great White Father in Washington. To him I carried some of our troubles, and I left with him the paper which long ago the wind of fate put into my hand—the paper setting forth the plans of some of the white race whom the Choctaws call ' Nahulla.' I told the President that, while we Indians remembered the words of an American statesman who declared: ' Congress can and will pass any bill to destroy the Indians,' we still held the hope that the United States Government would investigate conditions here in the Territory.

" It was long before I could get the ear of the President, and then I had to wait several days before I could obtain an answer to my plea that justice might be dealt out to the Five Nations. When it seemed as if I must come back to you bringing word that my mission had been vain, there came from the White House an assurance that one who bears the name of a world conqueror should be sent here to report the truth."

From the crowd rose a murmur which swelled into a shout of joy. Hattakowa, waiting for the confusion to subside, forgot all else except that Pakali was near him. Again he looked at her, and again her eyes gave him the assurance that her soul sought his in a final understanding which

concerned itself not with earth, but with hope of life beyond the great chasm of death.

"Since I am going away from you to-day," Hattakowa said, when there was silence once again, "I want to speak to you of your relation to the civilised world of which you are soon to become a part. In a little while our tribal existence will be but a memory. Treasure all the traditions of our people, for there will come a time when the white man will change his estimate of the Indian; there will be a period in which the right story of our race will be accepted, and the descendants of those who have robbed and mistreated the American aborigines will blush with shame. It may be that the youngest of you will be old before the time of our justification comes, for no deed of yours can hasten it. Therefore, I would counsel you to conform to the changes which are inevitable. It is useless to fight against what is called progress; take what is best of the white man's civilisation and do not waste strength in combating powers that must conquer you. Become good citizens of the United States, and, as long as possible, keep in your possession the few acres of land which will be apportioned to you from the great tract that was pledged to us forever—'As long as water runs, and grass grows.'"

While Hattakowa spoke one of John Oaktree's sons acted as interpreter to the fullbloods, some of whom shook their heads as if they were loath to accept the advice falling from Hattakowa's lips.

Standing before the war bonnet, Hattakowa faced the west and he saw that the sun was near the horizon.

"It is time for me to say farewell to you," he announced in steady tones.

A hush fell upon the people, and Hattakowa, passing around the circle, touched the hands of the old men and spoke gentle words to the women and children. Judge Maury could but shake his head as he uttered a last protest

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against the madnesss which had caused Hattakowa to decline legal defence. He and Ogden sorrowfully clasped the hand held out to them. Next, with words of advice Hattakowa took leave of his kinsmen, among whom were fullbloods that he addressed in the Chickasaw and Choctaw tongues.

Last of all he stood before his mother and Pakali. Beaumont, leaning upon his cane, stepped forward to whisper that he believed the Little Mother waited to greet one who had been as Pakali's brother to her.

Mrs. Dixon put her arms around her son's neck and Hattakowa kissed her many times, telling her again and again that she must not mourn for him. Then he reached out his arms toward Pakali, who gave him both her hands.

"It is not farewell to you, my Star Woman," he said, "for my spirit often will be near you." He dropped her hands while he folded Miko to his breast.

"Little Chieftain, in your care I leave your mother," he said. "Watch over her, and never be Ahaikahno—The Careless One."

The child clung to Hattakowa, promising that he would try to be a brave worthy to belong to the Chickasaws.

"And, although you go often into the forest, neglect not aiikhuma—the place of learning," admonished Hattakowa, kissing the boy's red lips.

Again Hattakowa looked into Pakali's eyes. Once more he took her hands.

"I carry the great love away with me," he said. "It will sustain my spirit, and, if I may come back to you, it may yet bless you in ways we cannot foresee."

"I can never be worthy of the great love," softly answered Pakali, "but it has brought me light. Whether my years be many or few it will be as a torch to guide me while I serve our people."

He pressed her hand in a grip so strong that the ruby ring cut into her palm. One solemn moment they stood there,

forgetting all the world. The encircling crowd was blotted out. As they lingered there on the threshold of eternity, the autumn day took on a surpassing glory, belonging not to earth.

"I know you have forgiven me for all the grief I have caused you," said Pakali, with a little quiver of the lips, "but it would be a comfort if I could remember some assurance given in this final hour."

"Dear, my heart never has held aught but love for you—the great love." Hattakowa faintly smiled upon her as if he would have her understand that love had mingled some joy with his portion of bitterness.

One of the Chickasaw officials gave a low signal. The glory faded from the day. The faces of the multitude again became visible to Hattakowa and Pakali. Back among the trees Hattakowa saw Marchand. Beckoning to the Kentuckian, he said:

"Until the night comes, watch over those who are dear to me." He did not touch the white man's hand; it was enough that he should give to him a precious trust.

Hattakowa walked back to the big tree, and now, according to the custom of the Chickasaws, it was the privilege of his mother to do the last service for him. A cup of water was dipped from Pennington Creek. Mrs. Dixon bore this to her son. Lifting it to his lips, Hattakowa uttered the old Choctaw salutation: "Yak'oke, sullitok kia, Ish aya ahke," which means, "Thank you, though I die, may you live on."

After the cup had been given back to the bearer, Hattakowa waited while the women and the children and the friends of faint heart went away from the place of death. Solemnly and noiselessly the awestricken crowd disappeared.

Mrs. Dixon, Pakali, Miko, and Beaumont lingered until only the men of the Chickasaw Nation remained. Hattakowa smiled upon his loved ones. "Sa kullo—I am strong," he said, looking across the little space which separated him

from them. Standing before the war bonnet, his arms folded across his broad chest, he kept his eyes fixed upon the little group. Tenderly he glanced at his mother, who once or twice took a step forward as if she would go to him, but she controlled herself. Pakali stood immovable with her face turned to Hattakowa, whose soul, purged of all its earth-born rebellion, had begun to put on the majesty of the new estate into which it was to enter.

The last moment of respite came. Beaumont put his arm around Mrs. Dixon, and, moving with the help of his cane, walked beside her toward the dusty road. Pakali and Miko followed them, but, when they had reached the centre of the circle, which they had to cross, Pakali stopped to look back at Hattakowa. As if he had been told to carry a last farewell from his mother, Miko ran back to embrace The Man Looking for the Sun.

Marchand went around the outside of the Chickasaw circle to meet Pakali. When he would have opened the door of the carriage waiting for the sorrowful party, Mrs. Dixon said:

"No, no. We will go down by the edge of the creek where the waters will drown the sound I dare not hear. I want to be close to my son until the end."

So they found a place where, above the drooping willows, they could see the changing colour in the sky, and there, with his rugged face uplifted to Heaven, Beaumont prayed while Pakali and Miko knelt at the feet of Mrs. Dixon. A few yards away Marchand watched for the sunset.

Hattakowa saw his Star Woman disappear and then he felt impatient for his day to end. In conformity with the old custom it had been his privilege to select his best friend as his executioner, and upon Henry Sands had fallen his choice. The Governor of the Chickasaws put a rifle into the hands of the old Indian. This was the signal for the condemned man to take off his coat, underneath which he wore

a black silk shirt. Upon his breast, on the place over his heart, one of John Oaktree's sons helped him to pin a square of white paper. Twenty paces from the war bonnet were measured off, and then Sands was summoned from the edge of the circle.

The old Indian went forward, but when he looked into Hattakowa's face, upon which shone the light of an immortal passion, Sands shook as an aspen swayed in a spring gale. Hattakowa stretched out his arms so that he might present the heart which throbbed with the great love for Pakali as a target for the executioner's shot. On his finger shone the ruby he dared not bestow upon any for whom he had a tender care since it brought ill-luck in love to all who owned it.

"One—two—three!" counted the Governor of the Chickasaws. Sands lifted the rifle to his shoulder. "Four —five!" spoke the Governor, but the old Indian, staggering from the circle, cried out:

"I cannot be the instrument of the law!"

John Oaktree, who understood the action but not the words, stepped forward.

"Omih, omih!—Very well, very well!" he exclaimed in the Chickasaw tongue. "I am the descendant of Tush-Kaa-Pela—The Warrior Helper. I am old, and, if the memory of this day hurts me, it will not last long."

The sky took on the golden hue of the sunset, and the brown woods were illuminated by the magic light. Again Hattakowa raised his hands. Lifting his head so that he could gaze beyond the place where the crowd had closed around Pakali, he gave his last thought to his Star Woman.

THE END

VIVID.

...ELT THRILL AS CHIEF SPOKE.

...NROVIA MAN REMEMBERS RED CLOUD'S SPEECH.

...eclares the Indian's Appeal for ...ustice Was One of the Most Elo...uent Word Portrayals He Ever ...eard—Vaccinated Children of the ...oted Warrior.

1909

...ONROVIA, Dec. 11.—For at least ... Monrovians, Dr. and Mrs. J. W. Force, the news of Chief Red ...ud's passing at the Pine Ridge ...ency quickens memories of nearly ...f a century ago when he was in his ...ne and the rising leader of a horde ...savage warriors.

... 1864 Dr. La Force, accompanied his wife, served as post surgeon for Seventh Iowa Cavalry, stationed at ...t McPherson to guard the overland ...il from Indian depredations. The ...t was built at Cottonwood Springs, ...old frontier trading post on the ...tte River. Early in 1864 Chief Red ...ud and a small party of subchiefs ...war paint called at the fort to pow...w with Maj. O'Brien, commanding ...cer, in regard to treaty violations ...d the invasion of Sioux hunting ...unds by the whites.

...he impassioned remonstrance of ...ef Red Cloud is often referred to Dr. La Force as one of the most ...quent and stirring appeals for jus...e and one of the most vivid word ...trayals he has ever heard. Un...tunately, no record was kept of this ...narkable address which made a pro...nd impression upon the white men. ...eaking of the violation of the terri...ial treaty Red Cloud said: "We go the South for buffalo; the white man there. We go to the North for elk; ... white man is there. The land is ...pty and my people starve."

...n July of the same year Red Cloud ...d the Brule-Sioux migrated north...rd. He was already dominant among ... tribesmen and his war parties

amie. The chief and a small party stopped at Fort McPherson where he sought out Dr. La Force and requested him to vaccinate the young brood of Red Clouds. He himself had had smallpox, so he explained, and did not need the white man's medicine.

While the score or more of his children were gathered in the dispensary for treatment, he waited outside impassively, refusing even to dismount. The young savages, intent upon the novelties of the dispensary, disdained to notice the prick of the vaccine lancet and acted as if vaccination were an every-day occurrence. Years afterward when the two men met again, Red Cloud remembered the army surgeon, who was nearly of his own age, and spoke of long vanished Fort McPherson.

On his second visit to the fort, Red Cloud was accompanied by a number of warriors who had evidently just returned from a foray. Fresh scalps dangled at their spear heads and they were laden with plunder. An Omaha Indian, serving in the Seventh Cavalry, rode out to interview them and reported on his return that one scalp was that of a white woman.

An interesting glimpse of Indian traits and customs is afforded by an incident related by Mrs. La Force. Red Cloud, several squaws, many children and a few warriors camped on the Platte about four miles from the fort. The next day or so an Indian strolled about the fort and casually, as it were, and with no appearance of interest, said he was a Kiowa who had been captured by Red Cloud's braves and condemned to be shot next morning as a spy. He was on parole, getting a look at the fort before he started for the Happy Hunting Grounds. Several of the soldiers doubting his story went to Red Cloud's camp at the hour named by the Kiowa as his last. They found him chanting his death song at the head of a shallow trench and when he had finished a shot rang out and he tumbled headlong into his grave."

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